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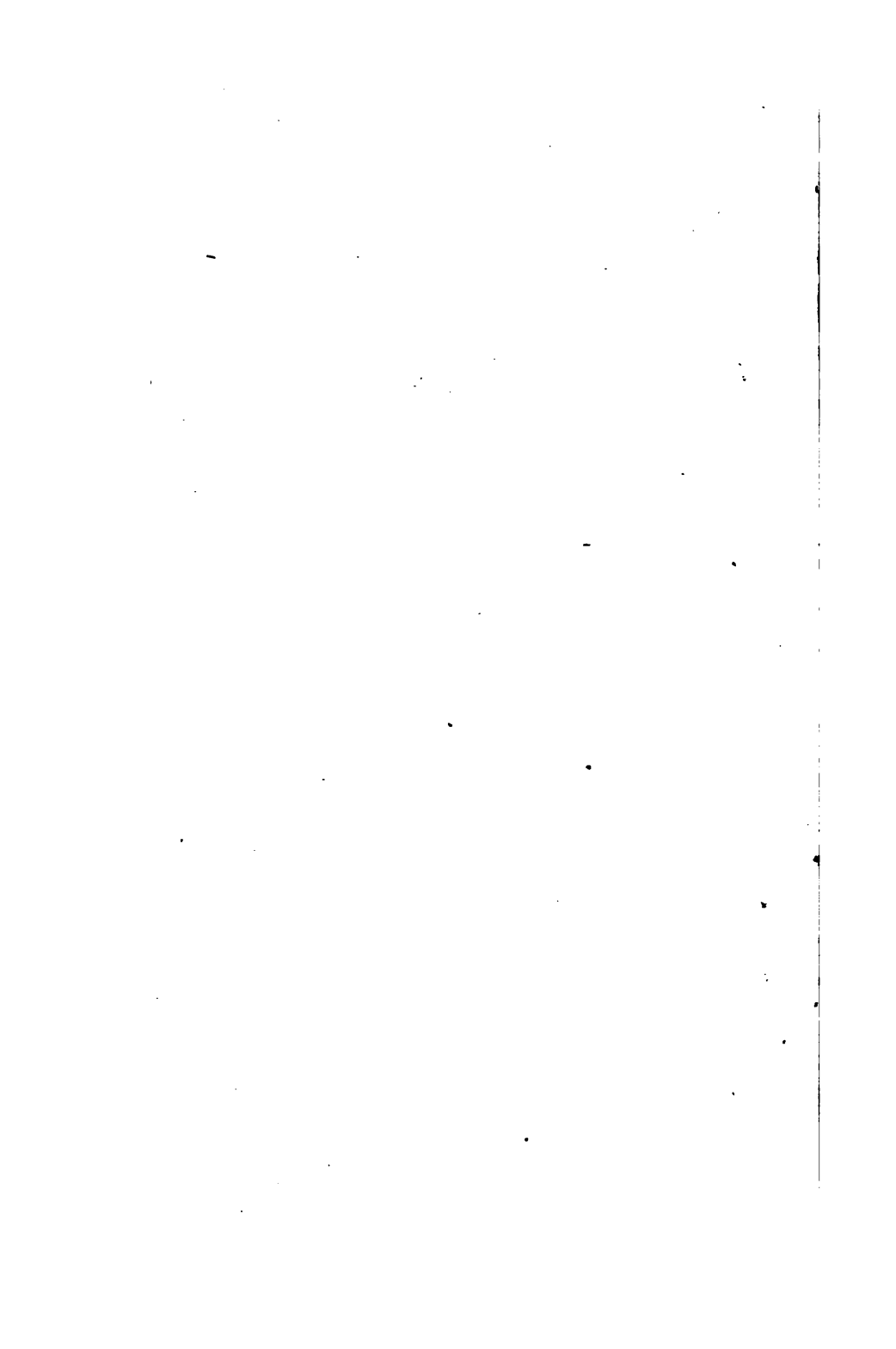
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LECTURES
ON
EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION.

BY
M. GUIZOT,
LATE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

TRANSLATED BY
PRISCILLA MARIA BECKWITH.

LONDON :
JOHN MACRONE, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

MDCCCXXXVII.

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WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.



PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

M. GUIZOT undertook to trace the progress of European Civilization, from the fall of the Roman Empire, and the invasion of the Barbarians, to our own time. He has successively brought under observation the principal elements of modern society;—the Feudal Aristocracy, the Church, the *Communes*, and Royalty. He has described their successive, or parallel development, and the metamorphoses they underwent during a long course of ages. He has investigated what influence each of these elements had, in producing the great events which have changed the condition of the world—such as the Crusades, the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, and the revolution in England

in the seventeenth. He has described with extraordinary care, the secret fusion, the mental transformation, which, dissolving by degrees all the elements of the middle ages,—so long at war amongst themselves,—at length divided modern societies into two great powers, the people and the government. The picture he draws of the reign of Louis XIV., and his long conflict with William III.:—that of the state of France during the eighteenth century, wherein he shows that France has always been the centre, the focus, of European civilization—has been especially admired.

It is impossible in a few words to do justice to the merit of these Lectures—but the public have already recognised their value, by the ardour with which they flocked to hear them, and the approbation they testified during their delivery.

PREFACE

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

IN undertaking a translation of M. Guizot's Lectures on European Civilization, I have been actuated by the desire to render accessible to the English public, a work abounding in new and grand ideas, and calculated from its general and extended views, to be useful to a very numerous class of readers.

In the prosecution of my task, I have endeavoured to present faithfully the opinions of the Author, and even to convey an idea of his style of composition;—how far successfully, the public will decide.

This is not the time or place to enter into any discussion respecting either the literary productions of M. Guizot, or his political career;—but

I may be permitted to express a hope, that the works in which he has so ably pleaded the cause of intellectual freedom will be justly appreciated so soon as they are known, and will obtain for their distinguished author enduring fame.

June 30, 1897.

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A

GENERAL HISTORY

OF

CIVILIZATION IN EUROPE.

LECTURE I.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM deeply penetrated by the reception you have given me. I accept it, as a pledge of the sympathy which has never ceased to exist between us, notwithstanding our long separation. I speak of an unextinguished community of feeling—as if I again addressed in this place, the same generation, the same individuals, who seven years ago, were the associates of my labours. (Here M. Guizot appeared affected, and paused for a moment.) Pardon me, gentlemen, the emotion, which your kind reception has caused. When I return here, I forget that a change has taken place—I expect to find every thing unaltered — and yet all is changed — how much changed !

B

Seven years ago, when we met together, our minds were filled with anxiety; we were melancholy and depressed—surrounded by embarrassments, and perils, we felt ourselves precipitated towards a calamity, which we vainly endeavoured to avert; by gravity, composure, and reserve. We meet together now; in confidence, and hope, with peaceful hearts, and unrestrained minds. Can we better evince our gratitude for these benefits, than by attending our studies, and our reunions, with the same composure, and the same reserve, which distinguished us during the period when each day we feared they might be prohibited or suspended? Permit me to suggest to you, that good fortune is variable, delicate, and fragile—hope requires the same watchfulness as fear; and care and prudence are as necessary during convalescence, as they were on the approach of illness. They will not, I am satisfied, be found wanting on this occasion. The same sympathy; the same intimate and rapid communication of opinions, of sentiments, and ideas, which united us during the period of danger, and which at least secured us from error, will unite us again in these more prosperous days, and enable us to reap a rich harvest. I rely, gentlemen, on your co-operation; and I desire nothing further. (Applause.)

We have but a short time before us. I have myself, had but little opportunity of meditating

on the course, I am to present to you. I have therefore considered, what subject could be most easily compressed; as well, on account of the short space that remains for the delivery of the lectures, as in consideration, of the limited period, allowed me for preparation.

It appears to me, that a general sketch of the modern history of Europe, considered with reference, to the development of civilization—a general view, of the history of European civilization; of its origin, its progress, its end, and its character—may be adapted to the time, we have at our disposal. I therefore propose, that my discourses, shall be devoted to this subject.

I have spoken of *European civilization*. It is evident, there is a civilization, peculiar to Europe—that a certain unity, is observed in the civilization, of the different states of Europe—which unfolds facts, of a similar nature; notwithstanding a great diversity of time, place, and circumstances,—which may be referred to the same principles, and which every where tends, to evolve results, nearly analogous. There is, then, a *European civilisation*, and I wish to direct your attention to it; in its undivided character.

It is evident, that this civilization must not be sought for—that its history, cannot be learnt, in the history, of any single European state. If it possess unity, it is not less remarkable for variety; and is not entirely developed, in any particular

country. Its features are scattered abroad : we must seek sometimes in France, sometimes in England, now in Germany, now in Spain, for the elements of its history.

We occupy an advantageous position, from whence to study the civilization of Europe. Although unwilling to flatter—even my country—I may say, without vanity, that France, has been the centre, from which European civilization has emanated. It would be too much to affirm, that she has on all occasions, and in every direction, led the way to other nations. Italy, has frequently surpassed her in the arts, and England, in political institutions. Perhaps we may discover, that, at certain epochs, other countries of Europe, have advanced before her ; but it is impossible to deny, that, whenever France has been preceded by other nations, in the career of civilization, she has displayed fresh vigour, has pushed herself forward, and has succeeded, not only in regaining her level, but in asserting her superiority. This is not all: for the ideas, the *civilizing institutions* (if I may so call them), which have taken root in other countries, have been obliged to submit to a new organization in France, before they could aid the cause of European civilization ; and it has been from France, as from an adopted country, more fertile and rich than their own, that they have expanded themselves, and advanced to the con-

quest of Europe. In fact, scarcely any great idea, scarcely any universal principle of civilization, has ever been promulgated ; which has not owed something, to France.

The cause of this, must be sought, in the genius of the French people. The genius of our nation, is sociable, and full of sympathy ; and amalgamates easily, and intimately, with that of any other nation. Whether this be effected by our language, the peculiar constitution of our minds, or our manners, is immaterial—one thing is certain—that our ideas are the most popular, are the most clearly presented to the masses, and penetrate them, with the greatest facility :—in fine, distinctness, sociability, and sympathy, are the distinguishing characteristics of France, and of her civilization ; and these qualities, render her eminently fitted, to march at the head, of European civilization.

If then we wish to acquaint ourselves with the history of this great fact ; it is not an arbitrary, or a merely conventional feeling of preference ; which points to France, as the centre, from which to commence this study :—on the contrary, we place ourselves, as it were, in the very heart of civilization ; in the most intimate relation with the fact, we desire to contemplate.

I speak of civilization as a *fact*—I speak designedly. Civilization is a fact, which may,—like

all other facts,—be described, studied, and treated on.

It has been well observed, that history, should consist of the detail of facts—nothing can be more true. But the facts worthy of attention, are more numerous, and diversified, than might at first be suspected. There are, the material, and visible facts, of wars, battles, and the official acts of governments; there are, moral facts, which though hidden, are not less real; there are individual facts, distinguished by their proper epithets; and there are general facts; which,—though nameless, and to which it is impossible to affix a precise date, or to confine within narrow limits;—are not the less true, and important, and which cannot be excluded from history, without mutilating it.

That, which we are accustomed to call the philosophical portion of history;—the connexion between facts, the chain, which unites them, the causes, and results of events;—*that* is history; not less than the recital of battles, and of exterior occurrences. It is true, that it is more difficult to discover facts of such a nature; the historian may be more frequently mistaken;—it is not an easy task to animate them, to present them in lively colours; but this difficulty does not change their nature, it does not render them the less an essential portion of history.

Civilization, gentlemen, is one of these facts. It is in its nature, obscure, general, complicated, and difficult to portray;—but it yet has a real existence, and is worthy of being sought after, and described. Many discussions have arisen on this subject; it may be,—it has been inquired, whether civilization be productive of evil, or of good. By some, its progress has been deplored, while others have rejoiced at it. It may be asked if civilization be a *universal* fact,—if there be, what may be denominated, a universal civilization of the entire human species,—if humanity be subject to one uniform destiny,—if nations have transmitted to their successors knowledge, and principles, which cannot be annihilated, but which must accumulate; which again will leave a deposit of new acquisitions, and continue thus progressing, to the end of time. For my own part, I am convinced that the human race, is subject to one determinate destiny; that there has always been a regular transmission, of the principles of civilization, and that consequently, it is possible to compile a universal history of civilization. But, without raising questions of so much importance,—which it would be difficult to solve, when the investigation is confined to a limited period, or to the history, of a certain age, or of a certain nation:—it is evident, that even within these limits, civilization is a fact, which may be described, and which has a history of its own.

The history of civilization, is indeed more important than all others, and comprehends them all.

Is it not evident, gentlemen, that civilization, is the most momentous of all facts—a fact, which is general, and definitive, from which all others proceed, and to which they all revert? Consider all the facts, of which the history of a nation is composed; those, which we are accustomed to regard as the elements of its existence. Consider the institutions of a people, their commerce, their industry, their wars, the details of their government:—and if you wish to appreciate these facts, in their general bearing, in their connexion with each other; if you wish to understand them, to distinguish them; what do you inquire? Is it not, how far they have contributed to the civilization of a people, what they have performed for it, how far they have aided it, and what influence, they have exercised upon it? It is with reference to civilization, that we not only form a general idea of facts; but that we estimate their proportions, and appreciate them at their true value—they may, in some degree, be compared to the rivers, from whence we expect the supplies that replenish the ocean.

Civilization is, as it were, the ocean, which receives the wealth of a nation; and in whose bosom, all the elements of the life of a people, all the resources of their existence; are gathered together. This is so true, that even those cala-

mitous events, which grievously oppress a people, and which are from their very nature detested—as despotism, or anarchy—if they have contributed to increase civilization, if they have caused it to advance, are in a measure forgiven—we pardon the wrongs they have caused; we pardon their injurious tendency, and are tempted to forget the price we have paid for it, whenever we recognise civilization, and the facts which have augmented it.

There are even facts, which, properly speaking, cannot be denominated social facts—individual facts, which appear to relate to the human mind, more than to public life: such as religious creeds, and philosophical ideas, science, literature, and the arts. These facts, would seem to interest man, either as sources of gratification to him, or as instruments of his improvement; and to have for their object, his mental amelioration, or his pleasure, rather than his social condition. And yet, it is with regard to civilization, that these facts often are, and ought to be considered. In all periods, and in every country, religion has prided herself on having civilized nations. Science, literature, and art; all intellectual and moral pleasures, have asserted claims to this honour, and when we acknowledge that their claims are well-founded, we think we praise them, and enhance their glory. Thus, facts, which solely by their relation to the mind of man, and

independent of any exterior result, are most important and most sublime ; become still more exalted, and are increased in importance, by their connexion with civilization.

So precious is this fact, that it not only imparts value to whatever belongs to it, but it sometimes occurs, that even the facts of which we speak, religious creeds, philosophical ideas, literature, and art, are considered, and judged of, principally with respect to their influence on civilization,—an influence which becomes to a certain point, and during a definite time, a decisive measure of their merit, and of their importance.

What then, gentlemen,—I ask, before commencing my history,—what then is this fact, considering it solely in its own nature, which is so solemn, so extensive, so precious ; which appears to be the epitome, the expression, of the entire life of a nation ?

I do not intend to diverge into pure philosophical discussion. I shall not lay down any rational principle, from which to deduce the nature of civilization, as a necessary consequence. Were I to pursue this method, there would be much fear of error ; for even here we meet with a fact, which must be proved and described.

The word *civilization*, has been long and extensively used. The ideas, which are attached to it, are more or less clear, and enlarged ; but nevertheless, it is both employed, and compre-

hended. It is the sense of the word, as commonly understood by mankind ; its general and popular sense, which must be studied. There is frequently more truth, in the common acceptance of general terms, than in the more precise, and rigorous definitions of science. Common sense, gives to words their ordinary signification ; and common sense is the genius of humanity. The ordinary signification of a word, is formed by degrees, and has its origin in facts ; whenever a fact is observed, which it is possible to express by an already recognised term ; it is, if we may so express it, naturally included in that term ; the meaning of the word, is extended, and enlarged ; until the different facts, the different ideas, which by their nature ought to be connected ; become gradually united, and concentrated under one term.

When the sense of a word, on the contrary, is determined by science ; this determination, being the work of a single person, or of a few individuals, is caused by the influence of a certain fact, impressing itself on their minds. Therefore, scientific definitions, are in general, more limited, and on that account alone, much less radically true, than the popular sense of terms.

By studying, as a fact, the signification of the word *civilization*, by investigating all the ideas it includes, according to the common sense of mankind, we shall obtain a greater knowledge of

the fact itself, than if we ourselves attempted to define it scientifically, although such a definition might at first sight appear more clear, and precise.

In commencing this investigation, I intend to place before you several hypotheses. I shall describe to you, a certain number of different states of society; and we will then inquire, if a general instinct will recognise amongst them, the condition of a nation which is becoming civilized; if we there discover the signification that is naturally attached by mankind, to the word *civilization*.

Behold a people, whose visible condition is easy and comfortable; they pay few taxes, they are not oppressed, they obtain justice in the private relations of life, in a word, the whole of their material existence is sufficiently happy, and prosperous. But, at the same time, the intellectual, and moral life of this people is paralyzed, and sedulously reduced to inactivity,—and without the sense of oppression, their faculties are closely compressed.

This state is not imaginary. A great number of small aristocratic republics have existed, whose subjects have been treated like sheep well maintained, and *materially* happy, but destitute of any moral, or intellectual activity. I inquire is this civilization? Is this a people who are becoming civilized?

Let me exhibit another hypothesis. We here contemplate, a people whose material existence is less easy, and comfortable ; though not insupportable. On the other hand, their moral and intellectual wants, have not been neglected: they receive a portion of mental sustenance, they are trained in pure and elevated sentiments, their religious and moral creeds have attained a certain degree of development ; but great care is taken to stifle the principle of liberty in their minds,—intellectual, and moral wants are here provided for, in the same manner that material necessities are cared for elsewhere ; but no one is permitted to investigate truth for himself, and to each is allotted a determinate portion of it.

Immutability, is the character of the moral life of such a people. This is the condition, into which the greater number of the Asiatic nations have fallen—it is the state to which theocratic governments reduce the human race—it is, for instance, the condition of the Hindoos. I ask the same question I asked before—Is this a people who are becoming civilized ?

I change the nature of the hypothesis. We now behold a people, amongst whom there is found a great development of certain individual forms of liberty, but where great disorder is prevalent, and where the inequality of conditions, is extreme. In such a state, force, and accident are the ruling powers. The weak are oppressed,—

they suffer—they perish: violence is the distinctive character, of their social state. No one is ignorant that Europe has passed through this state. But is it a civilized state? It may, without doubt, contain principles of civilization, which may be successively developed, but the ruling principle of such a state of society, is certainly not what the common sense of mankind would denominate civilization.

I present a fourth, and last hypothesis. Here the liberty of individuals is very great, inequality of condition amongst them is unfrequent, or at least only temporary. Every one may do whatever he pleases, and his power is commonly equal to that of his neighbour—but very few general interests, very few public ideas exist; we find but a limited society—in a word, the faculties of individuals are developed, and their existence passes away without influencing others, without leaving any impression: one generation succeeds another; but society is found, and is left by each at the same point. This is the condition of savage tribes. Liberty, and equality exist amongst them; but civilization, assuredly does not.

I might multiply these hypotheses; but I think we have heard enough to enable us to distinguish, what is the popular, and natural sense of the word civilization. It is evident, that not one of the states of society I have sketched, accords with the idea which the common sense of mankind,

forms of this term. Why? It appears to me that the primary fact, which is comprehended in the word *civilization* (and this results, from the different examples I have placed in review before you), is the fact of progress—of development: it awakens the idea of a people who are pressing forward, not in order to change their place, but their condition—of a people whose resources are being unfolded, and who, at the same time, are becoming ameliorated. The idea of progress—of development—appears to me, to be the fundamental idea, contained in the word *civilization*.

What is this progress? Wherein consists this development? Here is the difficulty. The etymology of the word seems to reply in a clear and satisfactory manner—it affirms that it is the perfection of civil life, the development of society—properly so called—and of the mutual relations of mankind, with each other.

This actually is the first idea, which presents itself to the human mind; when the word *civilization* is pronounced. We instantly picture to ourselves every social relation in its most extended form, in its greatest activity, and possessing the best organization:—on one side, a growing increase of the power and well-being of society; on the other a more equitable distribution, between individuals, of the power and advantages thus produced.

Is this all, gentlemen? Have we exhausted the natural and usual sense of the word *civilization*? Does that fact contain nothing more?

Is then, the human race, no better than a community of ants; a society, the springs of whose movements, are order, and well-being; and where the object to be attained, and the progress to be accomplished, consists merely in the greatest accumulation of labour, and the most equitable division of its fruits?

The instinct of mankind is unwilling to admit so narrow a definition of human destinies. At the first glance they discover that the word *civilization*, comprehends something more extended, more complicated—something which is superior even to the perfection of social relations, of power, and of social happiness. Facts, public opinion, and the universally received sense of the term, coincide with this instinct.

Consider Rome in the glorious days of the republic, after the second Punic war, during the period of her most illustrious virtue; when she advanced to the conquest of the world; when the social state was evidently progressing. Contemplate her again, under Augustus, at the epoch from whence her decline is dated; when the progressive movement of society was, to say the least, arrested; when pernicious principles had all but prevailed:—yet every one will affirm, that Rome, in the reign of Augustus, was more civi-

lized than she was, in the days of Fabricius, or of Cincinnatus.

Let us transport ourselves elsewhere—let us consider France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is evident that in a social point of view; so far as regards the accumulation, and distribution of the comforts, and conveniences of life amongst individuals; France, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was inferior to many other countries of Europe—to Holland and to England, for instance. I believe that in Holland and in England, social activity was greater, increased more rapidly, and distributed its fruits more equitably than in France. Nevertheless, inquire the general opinion: you will be informed that France, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was the most civilized country of Europe. Europe has not hesitated to answer this question. All the remains of European literature bear traces of the opinion which prevailed respecting France.

We might point to many other states, besides those alluded to, where wealth is greater, increases more rapidly, and is more justly distributed amongst individuals than it is elsewhere;—yet whose civilization nevertheless—by the spontaneous instinct, by the common sense of mankind—is reputed inferior to that of other states less fortunately circumstanced, considered only with regard to their social relations. What, then, do

those countries possess, which acquire the right, and the privilege, of being denominated civilized? What is it that, in their case, compensates for so much that is wanting?

It is, that another development—besides the development of social life, is there clearly manifested—the development of individual life—of intellectual existence—the development of man in himself, of his faculties, his sentiments, and his ideas. If society, is there less perfect, humanity appears greater and more powerful. Many social victories must yet be gained, but immense intellectual and moral conquests have been achieved. To the mass of the people, are yet wanting many comforts, many rights; but the nation can boast of many great men, who are distinguished in the eyes of the world. Literature, science, and art, are here exhibited in all their splendour;—and wherever mankind discover these splendid images, these glorified representations of human nature—wherever they behold these treasures of sublime enjoyment—with one voice they name and recognise civilization!

Two facts, are included in the great fact of civilization—it subsists under two states, it is revealed by two signs—the development of social, and that of individual activity;—the progress of society, and the progress of humanity. And, wherever the outward condition of man, is extended, vivified, and ameliorated—and wherever

his mental nature is exhibited with brilliancy, and grandeur—by these two signs, and often, notwithstanding the profound imperfection of the social state; mankind applaud and proclaim civilization !

Such is, if I am not mistaken, the result of a purely rational examination, of the general opinions of men. If we interrogate history, properly so called—if we investigate the nature of the great crises of civilization ; of those facts, which, it is universally admitted, have caused it rapidly to advance—we shall invariably recognise one, or other, of the two elements, I have pointed out. The events, which have forwarded civilization, are invariably the crises of individual, or of social development—of those facts, which have changed the intellectual nature of man ; his creed, his manners, his outward condition, or his situation with respect to his species.

Christianity, for instance, not only on its first promulgation ; but during the first centuries of its existence, did not address itself to the social state :—it openly announced that its purpose was not to affect it ; it commanded the slave to obey its master ; it did not attack any of the great evils, any of the wrongs of society, as it was then constituted. Who will, nevertheless, be found to deny that Christianity was one of the grand crises of civilization ? Why ? Because it changed the inward nature of man, his belief, his sentiments

—because it regenerated the moral being, the intellectual creature.

We have witnessed a crisis of another kind—a crisis which did not affect the intellectual nature of man, but to his outward condition—which changed and regenerated society. This likewise assuredly was one of the decisive crises of civilization. If you extend your investigation throughout all history, you will every where find the same results. You will not discover any important fact which has contributed to the development of civilization; that has not exercised an influence such as I have described; either of one kind or the other.

Such is, if I am not mistaken, the natural and popular sense of the term; here is the fact, I will not say demonstrated, but described, verified (if not perfectly), at least in its grand features. We have before us the two elements of civilization.

I now, gentlemen, inquire, if either of these alone is sufficient to constitute it? If the development of the social state, or of the individual man, were manifested alone, would civilization exist? Would mankind recognise it?—or have the two facts such an intimate and necessary connexion; that, if they are not exhibited simultaneously, they are nevertheless inseparable, and that, sooner or later, one will produce the other?

It appears to me, that this subject admits of three modes of investigation. We may examine

the constitution, of the two elements of civilization, and inquire, if by that constitution alone they are, or are not, strictly united, and indispensable to each other. We may explore history, in order to ascertain if they have been singly, and separately exhibited, or if one has invariably produced the other. We may lastly interrogate the generally received opinion of mankind, respecting this question—we may in fact interrogate common sense.

I, in the first place, address myself to general opinion. Whenever a great change is accomplished in the condition of a country,—whenever a great development of riches, and of power, becomes apparent,—whenever a revolution, in the distribution of social wealth is effected, this new fact, excites opposition, and hostility. This is inevitable.

What is the argument used by the adversaries of change? They contend that this progress of the social state, does not ameliorate, does not equally regenerate the moral state, the intellectual nature of man;—that it is a false, and deceptive progress, detrimental to morality, to the perfection of human nature. The friends of social development, repel the attack with energy; they sustain, on the contrary, that the progress of society, necessarily advances the progress of morality,—that the intellectual life, is always

most purified, and ameliorated, where the external condition enjoys the greatest prosperity.

This is the state of the question, as it remains between the adversaries and the partisans of the new order of things.

Reverse the hypothesis. Suppose the moral development in a progressive state. What do those who labour to advance it generally promise? What did the religious dictators, the sages, the poets, all, who in the origin of societies, exerted themselves to form, and to soften manners promise? They promised the amelioration of the social condition, the more equal division of property. What, I would ask, do these contests, these promises infer? They infer, that in the spontaneous, and intimate conviction of men, the two elements of civilization—the development of social, and of moral existence, are intimately connected, and that mankind expect, that one should succeed, as a necessary consequence of the other.

It is to this natural conviction, that we address ourselves, when, in order to forward, or to combat, one or other of these forms of development, we affirm, or deny their union. We know, that if it were possible to persuade mankind; that the amelioration of the social state, would retard the intellectual progress of individuals; any revolution accomplished in society, would be deprecated, and weakened in its effects.

On the contrary, when we promise to mankind the amelioration of society, as a consequence of the amelioration of its individual members ; we know that they are naturally disposed to believe this promise ; and we therefore take advantage of their persuasion. It consequently becomes apparent, that the instinctive belief of humanity is ; that the two elements of civilization are intimately connected, and reciprocally produce each other.

If we consult the history of the world, we shall obtain the same reply. We shall find that every great development of the *intellectual man*, has been rendered beneficial to society ; and every great development of the social state, has been turned to the profit of humanity. Whichever of these facts predominates, and appears with the greatest lustre ; impresses its peculiar character on the movement. The succeeding fact may not be developed ; may not (if I may so express it) appear to complete the civilization which the first commenced, until after a long interval, after a thousand obstacles, and a thousand transformations. But if we observe attentively, we may discover the chain which unites them. The progress of the Almighty is illimitable. When his Providence has established a principle, its effects may not be immediately revealed ; but they will become apparent in succeeding ages, when the hour for their fulfilment is arrived. To use our

ordinary language—if the reasoning of Providence is slow, his logic is not less indubitable. The Almighty may be said to have his moments of repose in time—to pass through it, as the fabled gods of Homer did through space;—centuries glide on between his steps.

How long a period elapsed, how many events occurred, before the moral regeneration of the human race by Christianity, exercised its great and legitimate influence, on the regeneration of the social state: but it has at length succeeded, who does not now recognise its effects?

If from history, we turn to the character of the two facts which constitute civilization, we are infallibly led to the same result. It belongs to the experience of every individual. When any one undergoes a moral change, when he acquires an idea, a virtue, or an additional faculty, in a word, when any of his mental powers become developed:—what is the desire which possesses him from that moment? Is it not the desire to transplant his feelings, and opinions, into the outward world; the necessity of realizing his thoughts beyond his own mind? So soon as a man makes any mental acquisition; so soon as his being assumes in his own eyes a new development, acquires an additional value; immediately the idea of a mission is attached to this new development, he feels himself impelled onwards, and constrained by his instinct, by an internal voice,

to extend the amelioration ; to effect on others the change which he has himself experienced. All great reformers have been actuated by this cause alone. Those great men, who changed the face of the world, after having themselves become changed, were governed by no other impulse.

So much for the change which is operated in the inward nature of man. Let us take another example.

A revolution is accomplished in a state of society ; it becomes better governed ; rights and property, are more equitably distributed amongst individuals ; that is to say, the outward condition of the world is purer and happier, and the practice, both of governments, and of mankind, in their relations with each other, is ameliorated. Well ! do you believe that the spectacle of this amelioration of external circumstances, will not react, on the inward nature of man, on humanity ? All that we are told of the force of example, of custom, and of splendid models ; is founded solely on this conviction, that an external fact, which is well-directed, reasonable, and just, will sooner or later, more or less completely, produce an intellectual fact of the same nature ;—that when the world is better and more equitably governed ; man himself is rendered more just ; that the mind is regenerated by external circumstances, as external circumstances are by the

mind;—that the two elements of civilization are strictly connected, that ages, obstacles of all kinds, may intervene; that they may be compelled to undergo a thousand transformations, before they are again brought together, but that sooner or later, they become reunited, that this is the law of their nature, the general fact of history, the instinctive belief of mankind. (*Applause.*)

This subject is very far from being exhausted: yet I believe I have exhibited in a complete, though superficial manner, the fact of civilization; that I have delineated and circumscribed it, and that I have placed before you the principal and fundamental questions, to which it gives rise. I might pause here, did I not wish to propose a question, which now suggests itself: one of those questions, which are not purely historical; but which we may denominate *conjectural*, if not hypothetical—one of those questions which man is only capable of comprehending in their more familiar sense, and will never be able to understand, in that which is more remote; which he cannot completely investigate, which he beholds only on one side, but which are not less real; which it is necessary he should consider; because they are without his desire, presented every moment to his view.

What are the means, what is the design, of the two forms of development we have spoken of as

constituting the fact of civilization—the development of society on the one hand and of humanity on the other? Is it for the perfection of his social condition, for the amelioration of his earthly existence, that man, in his faculties, his sentiments, his ideas, and his whole being, becomes fully developed? or is it, that the amelioration of the social condition, the progress of society—society itself, is only the theatre, the occasion, the moving power of the development of the individual? In a word, is society formed to benefit the individual, or the individual to benefit society? On the reply to this interrogation, will inevitably depend the question, whether the destiny of man is purely social, whether society, exhausts and absorbs the entire man; or whether something be not inherent in his nature foreign to his existence on earth, and superior to it?

Gentlemen, a man I feel honoured to call my friend; a man who has passed through reunions such as ours, to ascend to the highest place in more powerful, but less peaceful assemblies; a man whose every word is impressed on the memories of those who hear him,—M. Royer-Collard, has solved this question; he has solved it at least according to his own conviction, in his discourse on the *Projet de Loi* relating to sacrilege. I find in his discourse the following expressions.

“Human societies arise, exist, and perish on

earth, *there* are their destinies accomplished. But these destinies do not comprehend the perfect nature of man. After the fulfilment of his obligations to society, the noblest part of his being, still remains free,—those exalted faculties through which he elevates his mind to the Divinity, to a future life, to unknown happiness in an invisible world. We who are individual, and identical creatures, actual beings endowed with immortality, our destiny is superior to the destiny of states.”*

I shall not, gentlemen, advance any thing further. I shall not even undertake to discuss this question, I am contented with having proposed it. It is the concluding point of the history of civilization. When the history of civilization is exhausted, when there is nothing further to be learnt respecting the material life : man is irresistibly impelled to inquire if every thing is finished—if there is nothing more ? This then is the last, but the most momentous problem which the history of civilization, can suggest. It is sufficient for me to have indicated its place and its importance.

From all I have said, gentlemen, it is evident that the history of civilization may be treated in two modes, may be considered under two different

* The opinion of M. Royer-Collard on the *Projet de Loi*, relating to sacrilege, pp. 7 and 17.

aspects. The historian may take his place in the centre of human intelligence, during a stated period ; during a series of ages, and amidst a certain people. He may study, he may describe, he may relate all the events, all the transformations, all the revolutions which have been accomplished in the inward nature of man ;—and when he has done this, he will only possess a history of civilization amidst the people, and during the period he has selected. He may proceed differently ; he may establish himself *without* ; he may place himself on the theatre of the world ; and, instead of describing the vicissitudes of ideas, and of sentiments, which appertain to individual being, he may describe exterior facts ; the events, and changes, of the social state.

These two divisions,—in fact these two histories of civilization are strictly connected ; they are the image, and the reflection of each other. Nevertheless, they may be separated : perhaps they even ought to be so, especially at the commencement, in order that each may be treated with perspicuity and detail. For my own part, I do not propose to enter with you on the study of the history of civilization in the inward mind of man :—I only design to occupy your attention, respecting the history of the exterior events ; of the visible, and social world.

It was necessary, however, that I should exhibit to you the fact of civilization, such as I conceived it

to be in its complex character, and in its extent, in order, that I might place before you all the grand questions to which it could give rise. I restrict my observations now, to more narrow limits ; and at present only propose to treat of the history of the social state.

We will commence by investigating the origin of the elements of European civilization, at the fall of the Roman empire. We will carefully study society, as it existed amidst those magnificent ruins ; we cannot revive, but we will endeavour to exhibit those elements in their relative situations, and to trace their progress, during the fifteen centuries, which have elapsed since that epoch.

I think, gentlemen, that when we shall have made a slight progress in this study, we shall speedily acquire the conviction, that civilization is still in its infancy, and that its career is very far from having been accomplished. Assuredly the human mind, has yet by no means attained the perfection it may one day reach ; we are far from being able to comprehend the total future destiny of humanity ;—nevertheless, let each of us, examine his own mind ; let him interrogate himself respecting all the possible improvements he expects, or desires ; let him then reflect on what now exists in the world, and he will be convinced that society and civilization are yet very young—that, notwithstanding the progress they have made, infi-

nitely more remains for them to perform. This, gentlemen, will not detract from the pleasure we experience in contemplating our actual state. When I shall have exhibited in review before you, the great crises of the state of civilization in Europe, during fifteen centuries; you will perceive how agitated, how rude, and how laborious the condition of mankind was, previous to our own time; not only in regard to their outward condition, and their position in society, but inwardly, in the life of the soul. During fifteen centuries, the human mind, suffered as much as the human species. You will see that the human mind has now,—for the first time perhaps in modern history, attained a state, however imperfect, of comparative peace and harmony. It is the same with respect to society. Society has evidently made an immense progress; the condition of mankind is mild, and equitable, compared with what it was formerly; we may almost, in reflecting on our ancestors, apply to ourselves the words of Lucretius:

“ Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem,”

We may even, without too much vanity, say with Sthenelus in Homer:

Ἡμεῖς τοὶ παρίων μὲν ἀμείνονες εὐχομένη εἶναι;

“ We thank heaven that we are infinitely more worthy than our predecessors.”

Let us, however, be cautious, gentlemen;—let

us not be too much elated by the feeling of our happiness, and of our amelioration—for we are liable to become the victims of two serious errors—pride and effeminacy. We may feel an excessive confidence in the power, and the resources of the human mind, and of our actual knowledge; but, at the same time, we may suffer ourselves to become enervated, by the tranquillity of our condition.

I know not, gentlemen, if the same idea, which has impressed itself on my own mind, has also been presented to yours; but I feel as if we were continually fluctuating between the temptation to complain for a trifling cause, and that of being too easily satisfied. We possess a susceptibility of mind, a power to meet exigencies, an unlimited ambition in thought, in desire, and in the impulses of the imagination;—but when we descend to the practical duties of life, when it is necessary we should exert ourselves; that we should use every effort, and make many sacrifices, to attain the object we have in view;—we become weary, our arms droop and fall. We are discouraged with a facility, which almost equals the impatience of our desires. We must be careful, gentlemen, not to allow ourselves to be overcome by either of these failings. Let us accustom ourselves to ascertain what we can legitimately accomplish by our knowledge, our powers, and our resources; and let us only aspire to those

things, we can legitimately, regularly, and justly attain—paying regard to the principles, on which our civilization reposes. We appear sometimes tempted to revert to the principles we attack, and which we despise ;—to the principles, and to the measures of Europe, in its barbarous state ; to force, violence, and falsehood ; practices which were habitual four or five centuries ago. But, if we yield to this desire, we feel that we are deficient both in the perseverance, and in the savage energy of the men of those days ; who suffered much, and who, being dissatisfied with their condition, laboured incessantly to amend it. *We* are contented with ours : do not let us risk its security, by subjecting it to the hazard of vague desires ; for which the time is not yet arrived. Much has been bestowed on us—much will be required from us. Posterity, will demand a rigorous account of our conduct. The people, and their rulers,—all, are in these days, compelled to submit to examination, to sustain responsibility, and undergo discussion. Let us attach ourselves steadfastly and faithfully to the principles which are the foundation of our civilization—to justice, to legality, to publicity, to liberty ; and let us never forget, that, while we reasonably require that events and circumstances should be clearly manifested to us ; we are ourselves placed under the observation of the world, and that our actions will in like manner be canvassed and judged.

LECTURE II.

GENTLEMEN,

In reflecting on the plan of the course I propose to present to you; I fear my Lectures may labour under two disadvantages;—that they may be too long, from the necessity of compressing an extensive subject into a limited space; and that they may at the same time be too concise. I shall frequently be obliged to retain you here beyond the accustomed hour; and yet I shall not be able to unfold, and exemplify, each question with the minuteness it demands.

If any of those to whom I address myself, should require explanations; if any uncertainty should exist in your minds; any serious objection to the arguments I have adduced, I request you will make known your sentiments to me in writing. At the close of each lecture, those who desire to receive a reply, need only remain; I

shall willingly give them every explanation that may be in my power.

I fear another disadvantage may arise from the same cause. It is the necessity, of being sometimes obliged to affirm without proof. This likewise is the effect of the limited time to which I am restricted. I shall be compelled to advance ideas, and assertions, the confirmation of which, must be referred to a later period. You must pardon me, if I sometimes request you to be satisfied with my word. Even at the present moment it is necessary I should ask for this indulgence.

I endeavoured in the preceding lecture, to explain to you, the fact of civilization in general, without noticing any particular form of civilization, and without taking account of time or place:—considering the fact in its own nature, and under a purely philosophical aspect.

I now commence the history of European civilization, but before I actually enter on the subject, I wish to make you acquainted in a general manner, with the peculiar physiognomy, of this form of civilization. I wish so clearly to delineate, and characterize it; that it may appear to you distinct from any other, which has ever been developed in the world. I will endeavour to do this; but you must be contented with my assertions,—otherwise, it would be necessary I should succeed in depicting European society

to you, with so much fidelity, that it would be immediately recognised as a portrait.

When we contemplate those forms of civilization which have preceded that of modern Europe, whether in Asia or elsewhere, including even the civilization of the Greeks, and Romans; it is impossible not to be struck by the *unity* which is the predominant feature of each. They each appear to have emanated from a single fact, or a single idea. Society would seem to have been governed by a single dominating principle, which determined its institutions, its laws, its manners, its creeds,—in fine its entire development.

In Egypt for example, the theocratic principle pervaded the whole of society. It was reproduced in her manners, in her monuments, and in all the remains of her civilization. In India, the same fact is apparent. *There* also we behold the almost exclusive domination of the theocratic principle. Other countries possess a different organization;—a conquering caste is paramount. The principle of force takes possession of society, and impresses on it, its laws, and its character. Elsewhere, society is the expression of the democratic principle. This occurred in the commercial republics, which were founded on the coasts of Asia Minor, and Syria,—in Ionia and Phœnicia. In a word;—when we consider the ancient forms of civilization, we find a singular character of

unity impressed on their institutions, their ideas, and their manners :—a single, or at least a preponderating force governs and determines all things.

I do not mean to assert that this unity of principle, and of form, in the civilization of those states, always prevailed amongst them. When we ascend to their more remote history, we perceive that the different powers which may become developed in society, have often struggled for victory. In Egypt, in Etruria, and even in Greece, and in Rome, the caste of warriors for instance, combated that of priests. Elsewhere, the spirit of clanship resisted that of free association. The aristocratic; was adverse to the popular system. But these contests most frequently occurred in remote periods, of whose history no traces exist, and of which a vague remembrance is all that remains.

The conflict between opposing principles, has occasionally recurred during the progress of the existence of a nation, but it has generally soon terminated in the victory of one of the powers which contended for pre-eminence, and which, from thenceforward, entirely governed society. The contest has invariably been concluded by some special principle obtaining a decided preponderance, if not acquiring an exclusive dominion. In the history of these nations, the war of conflicting principles, or the coexistence of those principles, has been only a transitory

crisis, or an accident. From thence it followed, that the forms of civilization amidst the states of antiquity, were remarkable for their simplicity. This simplicity has had very different results. Sometimes, as in Greece, the simplicity of the social principle, was the cause of a prodigiously rapid development. Never were the genius, and the resources of any other people, displayed in so short a time, and with so much splendour. But after this grand effort, the energies of Greece appeared suddenly paralyzed; and if her fall was not quite so precipitate as her progress; at least it was singularly rapid. It would seem that the creative force of the principle of Grecian civilization, was exhausted; and no other principle appeared to supply its place.

In other countries, in Egypt and India, for instance, the unity of the principle of civilization had another effect. Society became stationary. Monotony, was the consequence of simplicity. The nation was not destroyed: society continued to exist, but it was immutable, and became, as it were, congealed.

It is to this cause that the tyrannical character, which appears under the most opposite forms, and the most opposite principles, in every form of ancient civilization, must be referred. Society was governed by an exclusive power, which would not tolerate any other. Every thing of a contrary tendency; was proscribed, and expelled.

Never did the dominating principle, admit the manifestation of any other.

This unity in the character of civilization, is equally impressed on the literature of those times; in all their works of imagination. Every one is acquainted with the remains of Indian literature, which have lately been disseminated throughout Europe. It is impossible not to discern that they are all stamped with the same die; they appear to have been produced by a single fact, to be the expression of a single idea; whether they be works of religion and morality, historical tradition, dramatic or epic poetry, the same physiognomy is impressed on each; the works of imagination bear the same simple and monotonous character, which is discerned in the events of their history, and in their institutions. Even in Greece, the centre of all the riches of the human intellect; a singular character of unity pervades both literature and art.

It has been far otherwise in the civilization of modern Europe. Without entering into details, I ask you to consider it, to recollect what you know respecting it;—it will immediately appear varied, confused, and agitated;—all the principles, all the forms, of social organization; are coexistent in it; the spiritual and temporal power, the elements of theocracy, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—all classes, all social situations, are mingled together; and a prodigious inequality is

observed in the liberty, riches, and influence of individuals. These opposing forces, are also in a continual state of warfare, without any one principle, being able to stifle others; and obtain supremacy over society. In ancient times, at the recurrence of each grand epoch, all societies appeared as if they had been cast in the same mould,—sometimes pure monarchy, sometimes theocracy, sometimes democracy prevailed; but each in its turn, prevailed exclusively. Modern Europe offers examples of every system; and all the experiments of social organization have been tried there. Monarchy, both in its pure and mixed form, theocratic governments, republics more or less aristocratic, have existed simultaneously, and, notwithstanding their diversity, they all possess a certain resemblance to each other, a certain family likeness, which it is impossible to mistake.

In the ideas and the sentiments of Europe, the same variety, the same conflict, is exhibited. The creeds of theology, of monarchy, of aristocracy, and of democracy, obstruct, combat, limit, and modify each other. If you study the boldest writings of the middle ages; you will never find any idea carried out to its ultimate consequences. The adherents of absolute power shrink instantly, and instinctively, from the results of their own doctrine:—we feel they are surrounded by ideas and influences, which correct their reasoning, and prevent it being carried out, to its full extent. The

partisans of democracy are restrained in a similar manner. We nowhere behold the imperturbable boldness, the strict adherence to logic, which is exhibited in the ancient civilizations. Opinions present as great a variety—as great a contrast. We perceive an energetic love of independence, in connexion with a blind submission;—a remarkable fidelity between individuals, and, at the same time, an imperious desire to shake off all restraint, to live unfettered and alone, without care or solicitude for others. The human mind was then not less agitated than society.

The same character may be distinguished in literature. We must admit that—regarding solely the beauty and style of the art—the literature of modern Europe is very inferior to that of the ancients; but if we consider it with reference to the intensity of its sentiments and its ideas, it is richer and more powerful. We perceive that the human mind has been excited to the consideration of a greater number of subjects, and that they have been more deeply studied. The imperfection in style proceeds from the same cause. The more numerous the materials, and the greater their value, so much greater is the difficulty of reducing them to a simple form. That which constitutes the beauty of a composition—that which, in works of art, we denominate their style—is perspicuity, simplicity, and the symbolical unity of the work. But, with the prodigious

diversity of ideas and sentiments which exist in European civilization, this simplicity and distinctness is much less easily attained.

This predominant character of modern civilization may be every where remarked. When we consider separately any peculiar development of the human intellect, in literature, in the arts, in any one of the paths which human intelligence may traverse; we find that in general the modern development is very inferior to that which corresponds with it, amongst the ancients. This is a disadvantage; but in compensation we find that if we consider European civilization as a whole, it appears incomparably richer than any other, and that it has exhibited simultaneously many more forms of development. Besides, it has already endured for fifteen centuries, and is still in a state of continual progression; its course has not equalled the rapidity of Grecian civilization, but it has never ceased to advance. An immense career lies open before it, and each day it rushes forward to its accomplishment with the greater impetuosity;—because it is attended by perpetually increasing liberty. Thus, whilst in the other forms of civilization, the exclusive dominion, or at least the excessive preponderance of a single principle, of a single character, was a cause of tyranny: in modern Europe, the diversity of the elements of social order, and the impossibility of any single element excluding the

others, have produced the liberty which now prevails. Being unable to exterminate each other, it became necessary that the different principles should exist together, that they should mutually enter into a sort of compact. Each may be said to have consented only to govern that part of the general development, which appertains to itself,—and thus, in Europe, liberty has resulted from the variety of the elements of civilization, and from their continual contests; whilst elsewhere, the predominance of a single principle, has been the occasion of tyranny.

This is, gentlemen, a true, and a wonderful superiority,—and if we proceed further, if we penetrate beyond exterior facts, into the actual nature of things, we shall perceive that this superiority is legitimate, and acknowledged by reason, as well as proclaimed by facts.

Neglecting for a moment European civilization, let us contemplate the universe, and the ordinary course of terrestrial events. What is the character of those events? What prevails in the world? Do we not recognise in it, the same diversity, the same variety of elements: is it not continually subjected to the same contests, which we remark in European civilization? It has evidently not been conceded to any principle, or to any peculiar organization; to any idea, or to any especial force, to subject the world, to regulate it immutably, to expel every thing of a contrary

tendency, and to govern it exclusively. Opposite principles, powers, and systems; amalgamate, combat, and mutually restrain each other,—by turns the conquerors and the conquered,—never completely victorious, never totally subdued. Throughout the world, we distinguish a diversity of forms, of ideas, and of principles, which are continually in a state of warfare, which constantly labour to arrive at a certain unity, a certain ideal perfection which perhaps may never be attained, but towards which the human race is conducted by liberty, and industry.

European civilization is therefore a faithful picture of the world; like the course of worldly events, it is neither exclusive, circumscribed, or stationary. For the first time, a special character has disappeared from civilization,—for the first time it has been developed; rich, laborious, and diversified, like the theatre of the universe! European civilization has entered (if we may be permitted so to speak) within the limits of eternal truth,—has conceived the plan of Providence, and treads the path of the Divinity. This is the rational principle of its superiority.

I wish, gentlemen, that this distinctive, and fundamental character of European civilization; should remain impressed on your minds during the course of our labours. I can at this moment only assert this. The proof must be furnished by the development of facts. It would nevertheless

strongly corroborate my assertion, if we should discover in the cradle of our civilization, the causes, and the elements of the character which I have attributed to it :—if at its first appearance, at the epoch of the fall of the Roman empire, we should recognise in the condition of the world, in the facts which, from its earliest days, have concurred to form European civilization ; the principles of the agitated, but fruitful variety, which distinguishes it. I will endeavour to investigate this subject. I propose to examine the condition of Europe at the fall of the Roman Empire ; and to attempt to ascertain in her institutions, her creeds, her ideas, and her sentiments, what were the elements that the ancient world bequeathed to the modern. If in these elements, we already behold impressed the character that I have described ; there will exist a considerable degree of probability, that that character is true.

We must in the first place, consider the character of the Roman empire, and the causes of its establishment.

Rome, in its origin, was nothing more than a municipality—a *commune*. The institutions of the Roman government, were adapted for a population, enclosed within the walls of a city. They were, in fact, municipal institutions—that was their distinctive character.

This was not peculiar to Rome ;—when we con-

temple that part of Italy, surrounding Rome, during the same period, we only distinguish a multitude of cities. A confederation of towns in those days, was denominated a nation. The Latin nation was nothing but a confederation of Latin towns. A similar fact may be noticed respecting the Etruscans, the Samnites, the Sabines, and the nations of Græcia Magna.

There was no *country* at that time. It is true the country was necessarily cultivated, but it was not inhabited. The landed proprietors resided in towns, they quitted their houses occasionally, to superintend their farms. They maintained on their lands a certain number of slaves; but the country such as we now see it, the scattered population, sometimes inhabiting solitary dwellings, sometimes residing in villages, which now covers the soil, was almost unknown to ancient Italy.

When Rome increased in extent, what happened? Read her history, and you will see that she conquered, or founded cities;—it was against towns she fought, and it was to them she sent her colonies. The history of the conquest of the world by Rome, is the history of the conquest, or the foundation, of a great number of cities. In the east, the extension of the Roman power, did not precisely assume this character. Population in those countries, was not distributed in the

same manner as it was in the west;—being subjected to a different social organization, it was much less concentrated in towns. But as our inquiries are now only directed to the state of the European populations, we need not devote much attention to the affairs of the east.

Confining our researches to the west, we everywhere see the fact I have indicated, exemplified. In Gaul, and in Spain, we still hear of nothing but towns; and excepting in their immediate vicinity, the land was covered with morasses or forests. Examine the character of Roman remains,—of Roman roads,—you will find great roads, leading from one city to another; the multitude of lesser roads, which now traverse the country in every direction, were then unknown. Nowhere will you discover any traces of the existence of the villages, the castles, and the churches, which have been dispersed over the country since the middle ages. Rome, only bequeathed to us enormous monuments, on which the municipal character was imprinted;—which were destined for a numerous population, agglomerated on a single point. Under whatever aspect the Roman world is considered; the almost exclusive preponderance of cities, and the social nonentity of the country will be observed. This municipal character of the Roman world, evidently rendered it very difficult to esta-

blish, and to maintain unity, and social relations, in a far extended state.

A municipality like Rome, might conquer the world, but could not so easily retain, and govern it. Thus, when the work appeared completed, when the entire west, and a great portion of the east, became subservient to Rome;—this prodigious number of cities, of small states, formed for independence, and self-existence, became dis-united, and detached themselves in every direction. This was one of the causes, which led to the foundation of the empire. It was necessary to change the form of government, for one more concentrated, more capable of maintaining union amongst such discordant elements. The empire attempted to bind together, and to unite, this widely-diffused society. The attempt succeeded to a certain point. It was in the interval between the reigns of Augustus, and Diocletian, that,—coeval with the development of civil legislation,—the vast system of administrative despotism was established; which spread like a net, over the whole Roman world, a multitude of functionaries, hierarchically organized, firmly united together, strictly allied to the Imperial Court;—and whose office it was to carry the orders of the government into execution, and to collect for its use, the tributes and resources of the people.

And not only did this system succeed in reassembling, and reuniting, the elements of the Roman

world,—but the idea of despotism, of a central power, penetrated the minds of the people with singular facility. We are astonished when we consider how soon this ill-united collection of small republics, this association of municipalities, imbibed a sentiment of respect for the sacred, undivided, and august imperial majesty. The necessity for establishing some bond between these divisions of the Roman world, must have been most imperative; since the creed, the spirit, of despotism, found so easy an access to the popular mind.

It was through the influence of these sentiments; aided by its administrative system, and the military organization which was connected with it, that the Roman empire combated the internal disorder which consumed it, and defended itself against the invasions of the Barbarians. Rome, though in a progressive state of decay, still fought, still endeavoured to protect herself. At length, the moment of her dissolution arrived; and neither the ingenuity of despotism, or the pliancy of servitude, any longer sufficed to maintain her integrity. In the fourth century the empire became every where disunited and dismembered; the Barbarians entered on every side; the provinces no longer resisted, and the general fate no longer caused them inquietude. At that period a singular idea possessed the minds of some of the emperors; they were desirous to try the experiment, whether

the hope of liberty, whether a confederation; a representative government, would not more effectually defend the Roman empire, than a despotic administration. I will now read to you a rescript of Honorius, and Theodosius the Younger, addressed, in the year 418, to the Prefect of Gaul, the object of which was, to attempt to establish, in the south of Gaul, a kind of representative government, and through its means, to endeavour to maintain the unity of the empire. (M. Guizot here read the following rescript.)

“ Rescript of the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius the Younger, addressed, in the year 418, to the Prefect of the Gauls, residing in the City of Arles.

“ Honorius, and Theodosius Augusti, to Agricola, Prefect of the Gauls.

“ In accordance with the most salutary recommendation, which (amongst other information evidently advantageous to the republic) your Excellency has made to us; we decree and ordain, as a perpetual law, the following ordinances, which the inhabitants of our seven* provinces are commanded to obey,—and which, indeed, are of such a nature, that they themselves might have petitioned for, and desired them.

“ Seeing that, on account of public or private

* Viennensis, Aquitania prima, Aquitania secunda, Novempopulana, Narbonensis prima, Narbonensis secunda, and the province of the maritime Alps.

business, official persons or special deputies, not only from each province, but also from every city, frequently present themselves to your Excellency, either to render their accounts, or to treat respecting matters which concern the possessors of property:— We have considered that it would be both profitable and convenient, that each year—commencing from the present,—at a certain time an assembly of the seven provinces should be held in the metropolis, viz. in the city of Arles.

“ By this institution, we desire to provide equally for both general, and particular interests. First, that by the assembling of the most considerable inhabitants in the illustrious presence of the prefect—if his public duty should not have called him elsewhere—the best advice, on every subject of deliberation, may be obtained. Whatever may be discussed, and resolved on, after mature deliberation, cannot fail to become known in the provinces; and those, who have not been present at the assembly, will be bound to follow the same rules of justice and equity. Besides, in ordaining that every year an assembly should be held in the city of Constantine,* we believe we shall not merely consult the public advantage, but also multiply social relations. In fact, the city is so favourably situated, so many

* Constantine the Great was much attached to the city of Arles; he established there the seat of government for the prefecture of Gaul. He also desired it should bear his name—but custom was more powerful than the will of the emperor.

strangers visit it, and it enjoys so extensive a commerce, that every thing produced by nature, and art, may be found there. Whatever is most celebrated amongst the productions of the luxurious East, of the spicy Arabia, of the delicate Assyria, of the fertile Africa, of the beautiful Spain, of the courageous Gaul, abound in such profusion in that city, that whatever we admire in the various regions of the globe appears indigenous there. Moreover, the junction of the Rhone, with the Tuscan Sea approximates the countries through which the river winds; and those whose shores are bathed by the sea; and increases the vicinity of their inhabitants. Thus, whilst the whole earth contributes to that city the choicest of her possessions—when the productions peculiar to each country are conveyed there, by sea, by land, and along the course of rivers, with the aid of ships, boats, and waggons—will not our province of Gaul receive as a benefit the command we give to convoke a public assembly in the city, where, by the will of the gods, every pleasure of life, and every facility for commerce, may be found? The illustrious Prefect, Petronius,* following his just and praiseworthy designs, commanded this custom to be observed; but, as its practice was suspended by supineness, and by the accession of usurpers, we have prudently resolved to restore it. Therefore, dearly beloved cousin Agricola, your Excellency, obeying our present decree, and the custom esta-

* Petronius was prefect of the Gauls between the years 402 and 408.

blished by your predecessors, will cause the following ordinances to be observed :

“ Let it be known to all persons honoured by being employed in public capacities, and to all who are the proprietors of domains, and to all the provincial judges, that they are expected to assemble in council, in the city of Arles, during the interval between the ides of August and those of September; the days of convocation and session being left open to their selection.

“ The provinces of Novempopulana, and Aquitania secunda, being the most distant, may, —if their judges are detained at home by indispensable duties, —send deputies in their place according to custom.

“ Those, who shall neglect to assemble at the appointed place, and at the prescribed time, shall pay a fine, of the value of five pounds of gold, for the judges, and of three pounds for the members of the *curiæ** and the other dignitaries.

“ We believe by this measure we shall confer an important favour, and greatly benefit the inhabitants of our provinces. We are also certain to increase the embellishment of the city of Arles, to the fidelity of which we owe much, as we have been informed by the patrician, our brother.†

“ Given the 15th of the kalends of May; received at Arles the 10th of the kalends of June.”

* The municipal bodies of Roman towns were denominated *curiæ*, and the members of those bodies, who were very numerous, were named *curiales*.

† Constantius (second husband of Galla Placidia), whom Honorius took for his colleague in 421.

The towns, and provinces, refused the proffered advantage; they declined naming deputies, no one would attend the assembly. Centralization, and unity, were contrary to the primitive nature of that society;—the spirit of locality, the spirit of municipality, every where appeared; and the impracticability of reconstituting a general society, and a general state, became evident. The inhabitants of towns, enclosed themselves within their walls, and occupied themselves exclusively with their own affairs;—and the empire fell, because its general interests were disregarded, and because citizens considered only the welfare of their own towns.

Thus we observe, at the fall of the Roman empire, the same fact which we recognised at the foundation of Rome, viz. the predominance of the municipal character and government. The Roman world reverted to its pristine condition; it was formed by a confederation of cities; and, after its dissolution, the same, or similar cities remained. The municipal administration is the gift which the ancient Roman civilization, bequeathed to modern Europe;—and though it was, without doubt, much weakened, and very inferior to what it had been in former ages, nevertheless it existed, and was still regularly constituted; having alone survived all the other elements of the Roman world. When I say *alone*, I am in error. Another fact, another idea, equally sur-

vived—the idea of the empire, of an emperor, of the imperial majesty, and of an absolute and sacred power attached to the name of emperor. These are the elements which Roman civilization has transmitted to that of Europe; — on one side the principle of liberty, exemplified in the municipal administration, in its customs, its laws, and its examples:—and, on the other, a general and common civil legislation, and the idea of absolute power, — the principle of order, and of servitude.

But, gentlemen, during this period, a society of a very different nature had become formed, in the heart of Roman society, founded on completely opposite principles, animated by other sentiments, and destined to introduce into the civilization of modern Europe, elements of a totally different character. I mean the *Christian Church*. I say the Christian Church,—not Christianity. At the close of the fourth, and the commencement of the fifth century, Christianity was no longer simply an individual belief, it was an *institution*,—it had become established, it possessed a government; a body of clergy; and a hierarchy, which determined the different functions of the priests; revenues; independent means of action; modes of reunion adapted to an extended society; provincial, national, and general councils; where the affairs of the society were debated in common:—in a word, at this epoch Chris-

tianity was not merely a religion, it was a Church.

If the Church had not existed, I know not, gentlemen, what would have occurred during the decline of the Roman empire. I confine myself to purely human considerations,—I cast aside every element, foreign to the natural consequence of natural facts, and I say, that if Christianity had only continued,—as it was in the early ages; a belief, a sentiment, an individual conviction, it is probable it would have fallen amidst the dissolution of the empire, during the invasion of the barbarians. It fell some time later, in Asia, and in the north of Africa, under an invasion of the same nature, under the invasion of the Mussulman barbarians;—it fell then, although it had become an institution, although it possessed an established Church. The same event, might with much greater probability have been expected to occur at the fall of the Roman empire. There did not then exist any of those means through which, in these days, moral influences become established, and are enabled to maintain themselves independently of institutions; none of those means by which a simple truth, a pure idea, acquires a great ascendancy over the mind, governs the actions, of mankind, and regulates events. Nothing similar to this existed in the fourth century, — nothing, which could communicate to ideas, and to personal opinions,

such authority. It is evident that a strongly organized, and a strongly governed society, was required to make head against such a disaster ; to come forth unscathed from such a storm. I do not think I say too much when I affirm, that at the close of the fourth, and the commencement of the fifth century ; the Christian Church was the salvation of Christianity,—it was the Church, with her institutions, her magistrates, and her power, which vigorously defended herself against the internal dissolution of the empire, and against barbarism—it was the Church which conquered the Barbarians, and became the means, and the principle of civilization ; the chain which attached the Roman, to the barbaric world. It is therefore the state of the Church, rather than the state of religion, correctly speaking, that must be considered, in the fifth century ; in order to discover what elements Christianity introduced into modern civilization, and how far civilization is indebted to it. What was the Christian Church at that epoch ? When we consider,—still under a purely human aspect,—the different revolutions which were accomplished during the development of Christianity, from its origin to the fifth century,—considering it merely as a society, and not as a religious belief,—we find it has passed through three essentially different states.

In the earliest ages, the Christian society appears a pure association of men ; animated by the

same sentiments, and professing the same creed. The first Christians assembled to enjoy together, the same emotions, the same religious convictions. We do not find any doctrinal system established, any form of discipline, or of laws, or any body of magistrates.

There cannot be a doubt, that in every society, however recent, however feebly constituted,—a moral power exists, which invigorates and directs it. There were amongst the different Christian congregations, men who preached, who taught, who morally governed the congregation;—but there was no established magistrature, no discipline,—a pure association of individuals, animated by the same sentiments, and professing the same creed, was the primitive state of Christian society.

Coeval with her progress,—and indeed at a very remote period, since its traces are found in her earliest remains;—we distinguish the rise of a code of doctrines, a body of magistrates, and rules of discipline. Some of the magistrates were named *πρεσβύτεροι*, or elders, who afterwards became priests; others denominated *ἐπισκοποι*, inspectors, or overseers, who afterwards became bishops; and others, *διάκονοι*, or deacons, to whom was committed the care of the poor, and the distribution of charity.

It is almost impossible to determine what were the precise functions of these magistrates,—the line

of demarcation was probably vague, and indistinct, but in time institutions became formed. The most remarkable feature of the second epoch, is, the fact, that the government, the preponderating influence; was possessed by the entire body of Christians. They directed the choice of the magistrates, the adoption of modes of discipline, and even of doctrine. The Christian people had not yet been separated from their spiritual rulers. The two classes, did not then exist, separately, and independently of each other,—and the great body of Christians still exercised the principal influence over their society.

At the third epoch we find every thing changed. A clergy was then established, separated from the people, a body of priests, who enjoyed riches, a special jurisdiction, a peculiar constitution; in a word possessed a form of government, and was in itself a perfect society;—a society furnished with all the means of existence, and independent of the society on which it was founded, and over which it extended its influence. This is the third epoch of the constitution of the Christian Church, this is the state in which it appeared at the commencement of the fifth century. The government was not completely separated from the people;—in fact, no government can be so, especially a religious government;—but in the relations between the clergy, and the

faithful, the clergy invariably ruled almost without control.

The Christian clergy had moreover another, and a very different mode of influence. The bishops and the clergy, had become the chief municipal magistrates. We have seen, that nothing, (correctly speaking) remained of the Roman empire, but the municipal administration. The *curiales*, or members of the municipal body, had become disheartened, and had fallen into a state of apathy, through the oppression of despotism, and the ruin of their cities. The bishops and priests on the contrary, full of life and zeal, naturally offered themselves to direct and superintend every thing. We must not reproach them for so doing, or accuse them of usurpation. They acted in accordance with the natural course of events,—the clergy alone, were morally strong and animated; and they became every where powerful. This is the law of the universe.

The impression of this revolution, is stamped, on all the legislation of the Emperors at this epoch. If you consult the Theodosian or Justinian codes; you will find a great number of edicts, which place municipal affairs in the hand of the bishops and clergy. Here are some of them (M. Guizot read several passages of Roman laws).

“ Cod. Just. L. I. tit. iv. *De episcopali audientia* § 26. In regard to the annual affairs of cities, (whether they relate to the ordinary revenues of the city, or to funds proceeding from the city property, or from private gifts, or legacies, or from any other source; whether they treat of the public works, the magazines of provisions, of aqueducts, or the maintenance of baths, and harbours, the construction of walls and towers, the repair of bridges and roads, or the law-suits in which the city may be engaged, on public or private grounds), we ordain as follows, viz.

“ The most pious bishop, and three men of good renown amongst the elders of the city, shall assemble, and examine every year the works that have been done; they will take care that those who conduct, or have conducted them, deliver an exact measurement, and render their accounts; thereby showing that they have fulfilled their engagements, in the application of the sums destined for the public monuments, for provisions, or the support of the baths—or of those intended to defray the expenses of the repair of roads and aqueducts, or for any other purpose.

“ *Ibid.* § 30. In regard to the guardianship of young persons of the first or second age, and of all those whom the law has placed under tutelage—if their fortune does not exceed five hundred *aurei*—we ordain, that they shall not wait for the nomination of their guardians by the president of the province, which would occasion great expense, especially if the president does not reside in the city

where the guardians are to be appointed. The guardians or tutors, in such a case, shall be nominated by the magistrate of the city in concert with the most pious bishop, and other persons in official situations, if there be any more such in the city.

“ *Ibid.* L. I. tit. lv. *De defensoribus*, § 8. We command, that the protectors of cities, being well instructed in the holy mysteries of the orthodox faith, shall be chosen, and instituted by the venerable bishops, the clergy, the notables, the proprietors, and the curiales. In regard to their installation, it must be referred to the glorious power of the prætorian prefect, in order that their authority may acquire greater solidity, and vigour from the appointment of his highness.”

I might quote, a great number of other laws,—but every where the same fact would become apparent,—that in the interval between the decline of the Roman municipal administration, and the establishment of the municipal administration of the middle ages, an ecclesiastical municipal administration was interposed ;—the preponderance of the clergy in the affairs of the city, succeeded that of the ancient municipal magistrates, and preceded the organization of modern communes.

You will readily comprehend what prodigious resources the Christian Church possessed, both in her own constitution, by her influence over the Christian world, and by the part she took in civil affairs.

Consequently, she has powerfully assisted from that period, in forming the character and aiding the development of modern civilization. Let us endeavour to ascertain the elements she has introduced into it since that epoch.

In the first place, the presence of a moral influence, of a moral force, of a force, which reposed entirely on conviction, on opinion, and on moral sentiments; in the midst of the deluge of material power, which at that period overwhelmed society, was an immense advantage.

If the Christian Church, had not existed, the whole world would have been abandoned, to unmitigated material force. She alone, exercised a moral supremacy. She did more, she entertained and disseminated the idea of a principle, of a law, superior to all human laws; she professed that belief so salutary to humanity, that there is, above all human laws, a law which has been variously named reason, or the divine law, in accordance with the diversity of times and customs; but which every where, and in all periods, is the same law, under different names.

At length, the great work of the separation of the spiritual and temporal power, was commenced by the Church. This separation, gentlemen, is the source of freedom of conscience; it is based on the identical principle, which is the foundation of the most ample and uncompromising freedom of conscience. The separation of the tem-

poral from the spiritual power, originates in the idea, that material force, has neither right or power over the mind, the conscience, or truth. It springs from the distinction established between the world of thought and that of action ; the world of internal, and that of external facts. The principle of freedom of conscience, for which Europe has fought, and suffered so much, and which after a very long period, and often against the desire of the clergy, prevailed. This principle, under the name of the separation of the spiritual and temporal power, was introduced at the dawn of European civilization ; and it was the Christian Church, which, being compelled to defend herself against the Barbarians, introduced and supported it.

The presence of a moral influence, the doctrine of a divine law, and the separation of the temporal from the spiritual power ;—these great benefits, the Christian Church of the fifth century, conferred upon the European world.

But the influence of the Church, has not in all other respects, been equally salutary. Already, in the fifth century, some of those pernicious principles appeared ; which have acted a prominent part in the development of our civilization. The Church entertained at that epoch, opinions favourable to the separation of the rulers, and the people, to the design of rendering rulers, independent of their subjects ; to the imposition of

laws on the people, to the attempt to subjugate both their minds and bodies without consulting either their reason or their will. The Church, endeavoured to disseminate throughout society, the theocratic principle ; to seize on the temporal power ; and to govern exclusively. But, when she found it impossible to acquire universal dominion, and to establish the theocratic principle ; she allied herself to the temporal princes, and, in order to share their absolute power, assisted them in maintaining it, at the expense of their subjects.

Such, gentlemen, were the principal elements of civilization, that Europe in the fifth century derived from the Church and the Empire. Such was the state of the Roman world when the Barbarians invaded, and conquered it. It only now remains for us to study the Barbarians, in order to be acquainted with all the elements, which became amalgamated and united, at the commencement of our civilization.

When I speak of the Barbarians, you will readily comprehend that I do not allude to their history, which does not at present concern us : we know, that at the period of which I speak, the conquerors of the empire were all of the same race ;—all Germans, excepting some Sclavonic tribes, such for instance as the Alani. We know, besides, that they were all in a nearly equal state of civilization ;—though some differences might

exist between them according to the greater or less degree of contact, the different tribes had had with the Roman world. Thus, without doubt, the nation of the Goths was more advanced, and their manners were more softened, than those of the Franks. But considering events under a general point of view, and with reference to the results, which affect ourselves, this diversity in the state of civilization amongst the barbarian nations on their first appearance, is of no importance.

It is the general state of society, amongst the Barbarians, with which we ought to make ourselves acquainted. At this day, it is an arduous task to define it. We can, without much difficulty, comprehend the Roman municipal system, and the Christian Church, for their influence has been perpetuated to our times. We find traces of their existence in a multitude of institutions, and of actual facts, we possess a thousand methods of recognising, and explaining them. The customs, and the social state of the Barbarians, have totally perished; we are obliged to divine them, either from the most ancient historical remains, or by an effort of the imagination.

There is one sentiment, one fact, which must previously be well comprehended, before we can represent to ourselves with fidelity the life of a Barbarian:—it is the pleasure of individual independence, the pleasure of enjoying existence,

vigorously, and unrestrained, amidst the uncertainties of the world and of life; the luxury of activity without labour; the love of a destiny full of adventure, of unforeseen events, of inequality, and danger. This was the ruling principle of the barbarian state; the moral desire, which forced these masses into action. At this day, in the regular society to which we are restricted, it is difficult to comprehend this sentiment, and the influence it exercised on the Barbarians of the fourth and fifth centuries. I am acquainted with only one work, in which the character of Barbaric life, is described in all its energy, — I mean, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, written by M. Thierry, the only book, where the motives, the inclinations, and the impulses, which were the causes of action in a social state, but little removed from barbarism; are understood, and reproduced, with a truly homeric fidelity. In no other work, are we presented with so faithful a portrait of a Barbarian, and of barbarism itself. Something similar, but in my opinion, very inferior, less simple, and less true, may be met with in Mr. Cooper's novels, in his pictures of the North American Indians. There is in the life of the North American Indians, in their mutual relations, and the feelings they possess in the depths of their forests, something, which to a certain point, recalls the idea of the manners of the ancient Germans. Without

doubt, these pictures are a little idealized, are rather poetical, the unfavourable side of barbarian life and manners is not presented in all its deformity. I do not speak merely of the evils that these manners introduced into the social state, but of the individual and intellectual condition of a Barbarian. This passionate desire for personal independence was rather more coarse, and more material, than the work of M. Thierry would lead us to imagine ;—there was, moreover, amongst the Barbarians, a degree of brutality, of drunkenness, and of apathy, which is not always faithfully transferred to his narrative. Yet, when we profoundly investigate facts, the love of personal independence is a noble and a moral sentiment, which derives its power from the moral nature of man, although it may be allayed with brutality, materialism, and stupid egotism,—it is the pleasure of existence, the feeling of personality, the spontaneous ebullition of humanity in its freest development.

Gentlemen, it was the German barbarians who introduced this sentiment into European civilization—it was unknown to the Roman world, unknown to the Christian Church, unknown to almost every form of ancient civilization. The liberty of the ancient civilizations was political—it was the freedom of the citizen. Mankind did not concern themselves respecting their personal liberty ; they regarded only their political free-

dom as citizens—they belonged to an association, they were devoted to an association, and they were ready to sacrifice themselves for an association. It was the same with the Christian Church. A feeling of great attachment prevailed amongst its members towards the Christian corporation ; a devoted respect for its laws, a strong desire to extend its empire ;—besides, religious sentiments created a reaction on the human mind, an inward and moral effort to subdue intellectual freedom, and to submit reason to the dictates of faith. But the sentiment of personal independence, the love of liberty, exercising itself merely for its own gratification, as chance directed,—this sentiment I repeat, was unknown both to the Roman and Christian societies. It was the Barbarians who introduced, and deposited it amongst the germs of modern civilization. In the progress of that civilization, it has acted so prominent a part, and has produced such great results, that it ought to be regarded as one of its fundamental elements.

There is, gentlemen, a second fact, a second element of civilization, which we likewise have received only from the Barbarians—Military patronage ;—the bond that united individuals, the tie that existed between warriors, and which,—without destroying the freedom of each, even without, in its origin, destroying until after a

certain point, the equality which subsisted between them ; — nevertheless constituted a system of subordination, and laid the foundation of that aristocratic organization which, at a later period, became feudality. The fundamental feature of this connexion, was the attachment of man to man ; the fidelity of individuals to each other, without any external necessity, without any obligation founded on the general principles of society. You will not discover in the ancient republics, any one man, freely and particularly attached to another. Every one was especially attached to the city. Amongst the Barbarians, the social chain was formed between individuals,—at first by the connexion between a chief and his companions, at that period when they were assembled together in bands, and overrun Europe ; afterwards, by the relation of the suzerain to his vassal. This second principle, which became so conspicuous in the history of modern civilization, —this devotedness of man to man,—was transmitted to us by the Barbarians ; and from their customs, it was adopted into ours.

I ask you, gentlemen, was I mistaken in affirming that modern civilization at its dawn, was equally varied, agitated, and confused with the general picture of it, which I endeavoured to delineate ? Do not we discover at the fall of the

Roman Empire, almost all the elements which we recognise in the progressive development of our civilization? At that epoch we distinguished three totally different societies; — the municipal society, the last remnant of the Roman empire; the Christian society; and the barbarian society. We find these societies differently organized, founded on totally opposite principles, inspiring mankind with contrary sentiments. We find the desire of the most absolute independence, beside the most unbounded submission; military patronage beside ecclesiastical domination; the spiritual and the temporal power always together; the canons of the church, the wise legislation of the Romans, the unwritten laws of the barbarians:—every where, the amalgamation, or rather the co-existence of races, of languages, of social situations, of manners, ideas, and impressions, the most diversified. This is, I think, a convincing proof of the truth of the general character, under which I have attempted to present our civilization to you.

Without doubt, gentlemen, this confusion, this diversity, this conflict, has cost us very dear. It has retarded the progress of Europe, and has been the cause of the storms, and sufferings she has experienced. Nevertheless, I do not think we have any thing to regret;—for it is the same with nations, as with individuals;—the

chance of obtaining a more varied, and a more complete development, the chance of an almost indefinite progress in every direction;—this chance alone, is sufficient to compensate for all that it may have cost. Altogether, this agitated, laborious, and violent state, has effected much more than the simplicity of other forms of civilization; and the human mind has benefited much more than it has suffered.

I pause here, gentlemen. The condition of the world, at the close of the Roman Empire, is now before us;—we recognise the elements which were agitated, and intermingled, to produce European civilization. We shall presently behold these elements in action. In the succeeding lecture, I shall endeavour to demonstrate their progress, and their effects, during the period we are accustomed to denominate *barbarous*;—in fact, the period during which the chaos of invasion was prolonged.

LECTURE III.

GENTLEMEN,

I have placed before you, the fundamental elements of European civilization; and I have shown you they may be distinguished in the earliest period of its existence; at the epoch of the fall of the Roman empire. I have endeavoured to point out the diversity of these elements, their incessant contests, and to demonstrate that not any one of them succeeded in acquiring supremacy over society; or at least in obtaining so great a pre-eminence, as to cause the subjugation, or expulsion of others. We have admitted this to be the distinctive character of European civilization. We now commence its history; from the period of its rise, in those ages, which are conventionally denominated barbarous. It is impossible, however, when we first contemplate this period, not to be struck by a fact which appears to contradict

what we have just affirmed. When we investigate the ideas that have been entertained respecting the antiquities of modern Europe, we perceive that the various elements of our civilization—the principles of monarchy, theocracy, aristocracy, and democracy, have each maintained, that it primarily governed European society, and was deprived of their power by the usurpation of opposing principles. If we examine every thing that has been written or spoken on this subject, we shall discover that every system which has attempted to demonstrate, and explain the origin of our society, sustains the exclusive predominance of some one of the elements of European civilization.

Thus there is a school of civilians, the advocates of feudality, amongst whom M. de Bou-lainvilliers is the most celebrated; who maintain, that after the fall of the Roman Empire, the conquering nation, which afterwards formed the nobility, alone enjoyed rights and privileges; that society was its domain, until dispossessed of it by kings and the people; and that aristocracy is consequently the true, and primitive form, of European society.

Beside this school, you will distinguish that of the monarchists;—the Abbé Dubos for example,—who on the contrary sustain that European society, was originally monarchical. The German emperors they affirm, inherited all

the rights of the Emperors of Rome, they were even called to the sovereignty by the ancient inhabitants, amongst others, by the Gauls ; they alone possessed a legitimate power, and all the victories of aristocracy, have been only so many encroachments on monarchy.

A third school presents itself, that of the liberals, republicans, or democrats,—as they are variously denominated. Consult the Abbé de Mably :—according to him, the predominance in society, in the fifth century belonged to a system of free institutions, to an assembly of free men, and to the people properly so called. Nobles and kings enriched themselves from the spoils of primitive liberty—she fell under their attacks, but she reigned before them.

Far beyond all the claims of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, the Church elevated her theocratic pretensions. She affirmed that by virtue of her mission, of her divine title, society was her inheritance ; that she alone had a right to govern it ; and that she was the legitimate empress of European society ; which had been brought by her labours, under the dominion of civilization and truth.

But we are here placed in a dilemma. We believed we had ascertained, that not any one of the elements of European civilization governed exclusively during any part of its progress ; that

they all existed in a continual state of proximity of amalgamation, of contest, and negotiation ;— but yet, at the outset, we encounter the completely opposite opinion, that even in the earliest infancy of our society, amidst barbarian Europe, some one peculiar element possessed a complete ascendancy over it. It is, moreover, not in any single country, but in every country of Europe, that under various forms, and at different epochs, the conflicting principles of our civilization, have manifested these irreconcilable pretensions. The historical schools we have just characterized are met with every where.

This fact, gentlemen, is important, not for its own sake, but, because it reveals other facts which hold a distinguished place in our history. In the simultaneous advancement of the most opposite claims, to the exclusive possession of authority, in the early ages of modern Europe; two valuable facts are disclosed. The first, is the principle, the idea of political legitimacy; an idea which has had so great an influence on European civilization. The second, is the true, and peculiar character of the state of barbarian Europe during the period we propose to consider to-day.

I will endeavour to exhibit these two facts, and to deduce them successively from the contest of original claims; which I have before referred to.

What is it, gentlemen, to which the various elements of European civilization,—the principles of theocracy, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy aspire, when they seek to be considered as the earliest rulers of society in Europe? Do they not principally aspire to establish their claims to legitimacy? Political legitimacy is evidently a right, founded on antiquity and duration;—priority of time is asserted to be the origin of right, and a proof of the legitimacy of power. Observe likewise, that this claim is not peculiar to one system, to one element of our civilization; it is common to all. In modern times we are accustomed to consider the idea of legitimacy as relating only to one system—that of monarchy. We are mistaken—it may be distinguished in every system. You already perceive, that all the elements of our civilization, have equally sought to appropriate it. Study the sequel of the history of Europe; you will see the most opposite forms of government, and of social relations, equally possessing a legitimate character. The Italian and Swiss aristocracies, or democracies; the republic of St. Marin, as well as the greatest monarchies of Europe have denominated themselves, and have been reputed legitimate. They have all founded their pretensions to legitimacy on the antiquity of their institutions, on the historical priority, and the perpetuity of their system of government.

If you turn from modern Europe, to contemplate other periods, and other countries, you will every where discern the prevalence of this idea respecting political legitimacy. You will find it every where attaching itself to some portion of the government; to some institution, to some form, to some maxim. In every country, in every period, some part of the social system, of the public authority, has asserted a claim to the character of legitimacy, derived from antiquity, and duration, and the claim has been allowed.

What then is this principle? What are its elements? What does it signify? How has it been introduced into European civilization?

If we trace the source of all power,—I say all without distinction,—we shall find it originates in force. I do not mean however to say, that force alone has ever established power,—or that a power, founded solely by force, would have continued to exist. It is evident, some other title is wanting. The cause of the establishment of power, is a certain social fitness, certain relations, which assimilate it to the state of society, to manners, and opinions. But it is impossible not to admit, that force, has polluted the source of all worldly authority, whatever may have been its nature, and its form.

This origin, gentlemen, is however generally repudiated. Every power, whatever may be its

nature, abjures it, not one will confess that it was derived from force. An invincible instinct teaches all governments, that force does not establish a right, and that, if they have originated from force, they can never possess any just title to sovereignty. On this account, when we ascend to remote antiquity, we behold different systems, different powers, a prey to violence, yet all with one voice exclaiming, "I was the earliest, I existed before others, I subsisted by virtue of other titles—Society was mine, before this state of contest, and violence prevailed; from which I am now suffering:—I alone am legitimate, but I have been attacked, and despoiled of my rights."

This single fact, gentlemen, proves that the idea of force, is not the foundation of political legitimacy. It reposes on a totally different basis. What in fact do all those systems proclaim by this formal disavowal of force? They proclaim, that there is another kind of legitimacy, the true foundation of all others,—the legitimacy of reason, justice, and right. It is to this origin, that they desire to attach themselves. It is because they will not confess their origin is derived from force, that they pretend to be invested by antiquity with another title. The first characteristic then, of political legitimacy, is to abjure force, as the source of authority, and to attach itself to a moral idea, to a

moral power,—to reason, justice, and right. This is the fundamental element, from which the principle of political legitimacy;—aided by time, and duration,—has been deduced. Let us see how.

Time, as it creeps along, changes and corrects, the works that force,—which presides at the birth of all governments, of all societies,—has effected. It corrects them through the duration of society, and the instrumentality of the individuals who compose it. Man, possesses certain notions of order, justice, and reason; he experiences a certain desire to render these notions prevalent, to introduce them into every thing that surrounds him. To accomplish this end, he labours incessantly;—and if the social state in which he is placed endures, his work is not ineffectual. Man brings into the world in which he lives; the love of reason, morality, and legitimacy.

A law of Providence, which must infallibly be recognised;—a law analogous to that which governs the material world, renders a certain measure of order reason, and justice— independent of the labours of man—indispensable to the duration of society. If a society endures, it may be concluded from that single fact, that its constitution is not totally absurd, unreasonable, and iniquitous;—that it is not altogether destitute of that element of reason, truth, and justice, which alone can ensure the

duration of societies. If society, moreover, becomes developed; if it increases in strength, if it becomes firmer and more powerful; if a constantly increasing number of individuals tender their adherence to the social state;—it is because the action of time has introduced into it a greater measure of right, of justice, and of equity, because its affairs have become regulated, according to the laws of truly legitimate power.

It is thus, that the idea of political legitimacy penetrates the world; and from thence proceeds to act upon the human mind. Its foundation, its origin, is laid—at least to a certain extent—in moral legitimacy, in reason, truth and justice;—it afterwards receives the sanction of time, from which it may be inferred that reason has begun to influence its affairs; that true legitimacy has been introduced into the world. At the epoch we are considering, we behold force and fraud hovering over the cradles of monarchy, of aristocracy, of democracy, and even over that of the Church. But you will see these evil principles, becoming continually ameliorated by the influence of time, and truth, and equity assuming their place in civilization. The introduction of truth and equity into the social state, has gradually developed the idea of political legitimacy; and it is thus it has become established in modern civilization.

It has been attempted at different epochs, to render this idea, the basis of absolute power; but this is contrary to its nature. It is so far from forming the basis of absolute power, that it has penetrated, and been permitted to take root in the world, in the names of justice and right. It is not exclusive, it belongs to no particular system, but is found wherever justice becomes developed. Political legitimacy attaches itself equally to liberty and to power,—to individual rights, and to the forms of public administration. We shall recognise it as we proceed—I repeat—in the most contrary systems;—in the feudal system, in the *communes* of Flanders and Germany, in the Italian republics, and in monarchy. It is necessary fully to comprehend its character, in commencing the history of modern civilization, whose various elements it pervades.

The second fact, which is clearly revealed in the simultaneous claims I have before referred to, is the true character of the epoch denominated *barbarous*. Every element of European civilization maintains, that, at this epoch, it governed Europe:—it follows, therefore, that none of them possessed a decided superiority. Whenever any social form governs the world, it is not difficult to recognise it. When we arrive at the tenth century, we acknowledge, without hesitation, the preponderance of feudality; in the

seventeenth we do not doubt that the monarchical form prevailed ; if we consider the communes of Flanders and the Italian republics, we immediately declare the supremacy of the democratic principle. Whenever any principle actually governs society, it is impossible to mistake it.

The contest for priority of domination amongst the various systems which divide European civilization, proves that they were all coexistent, without any one having so generally, so indisputably prevailed, as to communicate its name and form to society.

This is actually the character of the barbarian age. It was the chaos of all elements—the infancy of every system—a universal anarchy, in which even the conflict itself was neither permanent, or systematic. I might, in examining, under all its aspects, the social state of that epoch ; show you that it is impossible any where to discover a general, or settled principle. I shall, however, confine myself to two essential points—the condition of individuals, and that of institutions. This will be sufficient to characterize society.

At this epoch, four classes of persons may be distinguished. 1st. Freemen ; that is, those who did not depend on any superior, or patron—who possessed their property, and regulated their actions, without control, and without any tie, which rendered them subservient to another individual. 2dly. The *Leudee*, *Fideles*, *Anstrus-*

ticnes, &c.; connected, at first, by the relation of companions to their chief; afterwards, by that of vassals to their suzerain;—in fact, attached to some individual, who, by means of a grant of land, or the bestowal of other benefits, had subjected them to the obligation of service. 3dly. The *Liberti*, or freedmen. 4thly. Slaves.

Was the position of these different classes fixed? Did individuals always remain within the limits by which they were environed? Were the relations between these various classes either regular or permanent? By no means. We continually see freemen descend from their rank, in order to take service under some chief, receiving from him in recompence some gift, and thus passing into the class of *Leudes*: while others fell into that of slaves. Elsewhere the *Leudes* endeavoured to detach themselves from their patron, to regain their independence, and to return into the class of freemen. Every where may be observed a movement, a continual transition of one class into another; an uncertainty, a general instability in the relations between classes;—no one continued in his situation, no situation remained the same.

Property was in the same condition. You are aware that there was a distinction between *allodial* property, or that which was totally free, and *beneficiary* property, or that subject to certain obligations towards a superior. You are

aware that it has been attempted to reduce this last description of property, to a precise and fixed system :—it is affirmed that benefices, were at first granted for a definite term of years, afterwards for life, and that they finally became hereditary. The attempt to classify them in this manner is fruitless. All these descriptions of property existed confusedly and simultaneously. At the same period, benefices for years, for life, and hereditary, subsisted together—the same estate passed, in the course of a few years, through all these different states. A general and settled condition, was equally unknown to property, and persons. Every where the painful transition from the erratic to the sedentary life—from individual, to the combined or actual relations between persons and property, was felt :—in this state of transition every thing was confused, local, and disordered.

Institutions were equally unstable and chaotic. Three systems of institutions subsisted together—monarchy—aristocratic institutions, or the patronage of some individuals and some descriptions of property over others—and free institutions, or the assemblies of freemen, deliberating in common. No one of these systems governed society; none prevailed exclusively. Free institutions existed; but those who were privileged to take part in the assemblies, rarely attended. Seignorial jurisdiction was not more regularly

exercised. Monarchy, the most simple, and easily determined institution, had not any fixed character;—it was partially elective, partially hereditary: sometimes the son succeeded his father; sometimes election was confined to one family; sometimes a pure, and simple election, chose a distant relation, or a stranger. In no system do you find any thing established; all institutions, all social situations, existed simultaneously, and were continually changed and confounded.

The same instability, existed with regard to states; they were created, suppressed, reunited, and divided; there were no frontiers, no governments, no people. In barbarian Europe, a general confusion of situations, principles, facts, races and languages prevailed.

What are the limits of this singular period? Its commencement is well defined; it originated at the downfall of the Roman empire. But when did it cease? In order to answer this question, we must understand on what this state of society depended—what were the causes of barbarism.

I think two of the principal causes may be distinguished. One, material; originating *without*, in the course of events—the other, moral, having its origin *within*, in the intellectual nature of man.

The material cause, is the continuance of in-

vasion. We must not imagine, that the invasion of the Barbarians ceased in the fifth century: we must not suppose because the Roman Empire was destroyed, and barbarian kingdoms were founded on its ruins; that the movement of nations had attained its term. This movement lasted long after the fall of the Empire, of which many proofs exist.

Observe, even under the first race, how continually the Frank kings were obliged to carry on wars beyond the Rhine. Clothaire and Dagobert, were incessantly engaged in expeditions into Germany against the Thuringians, the Danes, and the Saxons, who occupied the right bank of the Rhine. For what reason? Because these people desired to cross the river, and obtain a portion of the spoils of the Empire. What was the cause nearly at the same period of the great invasions of Italy, by the Franks established in Gaul; and principally by the Eastern, or Austrasian Franks? Why did they invade Switzerland, and pass the Alps? Because, new populations pressed them on the north-east;—in their expeditions they were not simply instigated by the desire of pillage; they were impelled by necessity;—their own establishments were deranged, and they were obliged to seek their fortune elsewhere. A new German nation appeared on the scene, and founded the kingdom of the Lombards in Italy. In Gaul, the Frank

dynasty was changed; the Carlovignians succeeded to the Merovignians. It is now admitted that this change of dynasty was effected by a new invasion of the Franks into Gaul; a movement of the barbarian nations which substituted the eastern for the western Franks. The change was accomplished, the second race obtained the sovereignty. Charlemagne commenced against the Saxons the same course of operations that the Merovignians had attempted against the Thuringians; he was incessantly at war with the nations beyond the Rhine. What excited these people to war? The Obotrites, the Wiltzes, the Swabians, the Bohemians,—all the Slavonic race, which pressed on the German tribes, and from the sixth to the ninth century, constrained them to advance towards the west. In all parts of the north-east, this movement of invasion continued, and determined events.

In the south, a movement of the same nature took place; the Saracen Mussulmans appeared; and while the German and Slavonic tribes spread themselves along the course of the Rhine, and Danube; the Saracens commenced their invasions and conquests on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The invasion of the Saracens bears a peculiar character. The spirit of proselytism, was united to that of conquest. Their invasions had the twofold object of conquering territory, and dis-

seminating a religious creed. The difference between this movement and that of the Germans is very considerable. In the Christian world, the spiritual and the temporal forces are distinct. The desire to propagate a creed, did not accompany the desire of conquest. The Germans in becoming converted retained their customs, their sentiments, and their tastes; the interests and passions of terrestrial life continued to govern them—they became Christians but not missionaries. The Saracens, on the contrary, were both conquerors and missionaries; the same hand held both the military, and the religious power. At a later period, this character produced a very injurious effect on Mahometan civilization:—the union of the spiritual and temporal powers; the confusion of moral authority and material force; caused the tyranny which appears inherent in that form of civilization, and occasioned it to remain every where stationary. But this result did not immediately become apparent; on the contrary, it at first gave prodigious force to the Saracen invasion. The moral ideas and passions which were connected with it immediately exhibited a splendour, a vastness, which was wanting in the German invasion; its progress was developed with more energy and enthusiasm, and affected the minds of men in a very different manner.

Such, gentlemen, was the situation of Europe from the fifth to the ninth century ;—pressed on the south by the Mahometans, on the north by the Germans, and the Sclavonians, it was impossible that the reaction of this double invasion should not occasion continual disorder in the interior of the European territory. Populations were incessantly displaced and thrown back on each other: every thing was unsettled, and the erratic life every where recommenced. Without doubt, some difference in this respect existed between the different states; the chaos was more frightful in Germany, than in other parts of Europe;—Germany was the focus of the movement;—France was more agitated than Italy. But society could not in any country become settled and regulated;—and the period of barbarism, was every where prolonged by the same cause, which had at first produced it.

I have now explained the material cause of barbarism, that which may be learnt from the course of events. I now proceed to the moral cause, to that founded on the intellectual nature of man; which was not less powerful in its effects.

After all, gentlemen, of whatever nature external events may be, man himself governs the world;—the world is regulated and set in motion by his ideas, his sentiments, his moral and intel-

lectual dispositions;—the visible condition of society depends on the moral state of man.

What is required in order to enable men to found a durable and regular society? First, that they should possess ideas sufficiently extended, to be suitable to the society and applicable to its wants and its relations. Secondly, that those ideas should be common to the greater part of the members of the society; and thirdly, that they should in some degree control their inclinations, and actions.

It is evident that if mankind have no ideas beyond their personal existence; if their intellectual horizon is bounded by themselves; if they are abandoned to the whirlwind of their passion and their desires; if they are not drawn together by common opinions and sentiments;—it is evident, I repeat, that no form of society can exist amongst them, and that each individual will assist in introducing trouble, and disorganization into the society he has entered.

Whenever individuality is the governing principle; whenever man considers only himself; whenever his ideas do not extend beyond himself; whenever he only obeys his own passions; society,—I mean an extended and permanent society,—becomes almost impracticable. Such, then, was the moral condition of the conquerors of Europe, at the epoch we are considering. I observed, in my last discourse, that we are

indebted to the Germans for the energetic sentiment of personal liberty, of human individuality. But in a rude and ignorant state, this sentiment becomes selfishness, in its most brutal and unsociable form. It assumed this character from the fifth to the eighth century amongst the ancient Germans. They only concerned themselves respecting their own interests, their own passions, their own desires;—how was it then possible for them to endure the restraints of social life? It was introduced amongst them, they themselves encouraged its introduction, but some act of imprudence, a gust of passion, or a defect of intelligence, quickly reinstated them in their former position. We continually see society endeavouring to form itself, but immediately becoming dissolved by the agency of man, and by the absence of the moral conditions which are necessary to its existence.

These, gentlemen, are the two causes which determined the state of barbarism. So long as they were prolonged, barbarism endured. Let us now endeavour to ascertain how, and when these causes ceased to operate.

Europe laboured to emerge from this state. It is natural to man, even when by his own fault, he is reduced to this condition, to be dissatisfied with it. However rude, however ignorant he may be; however devoted to his own interest, to his own passions;—an inward voice, an instinct,

assures him, that he is made for better things, that he possesses superior powers, and is reserved for a higher destiny. In the midst of his disorder, the love of order, and of progress, pursues and torments him. He is agitated by a desire for justice, and development; he feels the necessity of foresight, even while he continues a slave to the most brutal selfishness. He feels himself impelled to reform the material world, society, and himself,—he even labours without inquiring what force impels him. The Barbarians were ambitious of becoming civilized, notwithstanding it was impossible they should be so;—since they abhorred civilization, so soon as its laws became felt.

Besides, many remains of Roman civilization yet subsisted;—the name of the Empire, the remembrance of that great and glorious society, agitated the memory of men, especially the senators of cities, the bishops, the priests; and all, whose power had originated in the Roman world.

Many of the Barbarians themselves, or their ancestors, had beheld the glory of the Empire. They had served in her armies, and had become her conquerors. The image, the name of Roman civilization, inspired them with respect; they ardently desired to imitate, to reproduce, and to retain some portion of it. This

also contributed to force them out of the barbarous state I have just described.

A third cause existed, which must be familiar to every one—I mean the Christian Church. The Church was a society regularly constituted, having its principles, its laws, its discipline; and actuated, at that time, by the ambition to extend its influence, to overcome its conquerors. Amongst the Christians of that epoch, gentlemen—amongst the Christian clergy—were men who had profoundly studied all moral and political questions; who entertained on every subject fixed opinions, and energetic sentiments; and who felt an intense desire to propagate their opinions, and render them dominant. No society ever made such grand efforts to influence all which surrounded it, and assimilate to itself the outward world; as the Christian Church did during the interval between the fifth and tenth centuries. When we more particularly study her history, we shall perceive all she attempted. She, in some measure, attacked barbarism on every side; in order to introduce civilization amongst those whom she subjected to her empire.

Lastly, a fourth cause of civilization—a cause which it is impossible fully to appreciate, but which is not less real—was the appearance of great men. No one can say why a great man

should appear at any particular epoch, no one can say how far his influence may extend over the development of the world—it is the secret of Providence, but the fact is not the less certain. There are some persons who are affected and disgusted by the spectacle of anarchy, or of social immobility; who are intellectually shocked by it, as by an unnatural circumstance, and are invincibly possessed by the desire to change, to regulate, to generalize, that which before was confused and irregular; and are eager to give form and permanence to the external world. This impulse has a terrific, often a tyrannical force—a force which commits a thousand iniquities, a thousand errors—for human weakness accompanies it;—nevertheless, it is a glorious and a salutary power, which, by the hand of man, violently affects and agitates humanity.

These different causes, gentlemen, these various powers, occasioned, from the fifth to the ninth century, frequent attempts to overcome the barbarism of European society.

The first of these attempts it is impossible not to remark,—although it had but an inconsiderable effect,—because it emanated from the Barbarians themselves. I allude to the compilation of the barbarian laws. The laws of almost all the barbarian nations were compiled and written between the sixth and eighth centuries. Before that period,—that is, before they established

themselves on the ruins of the empire,—custom alone governed the Barbarians. Amongst the laws which were compiled, may be reckoned the laws of the Burgundians, the Salian Franks, the Ripuarian Franks, the Visigoths, the Saxons, the Frisians, the Bavarians, the Germans, &c. This was evidently the commencement of civilization—an attempt to bring society under the dominion of general, and fixed principles. Its success could not be great. The written laws of a society which no longer existed—the laws of the social state of the Barbarians before their establishment on the Roman territory; before they had exchanged the erratic for the sedentary life, and the condition of nomade warriors for that of proprietors—could scarcely be useful under a new order of things. We occasionally find, amongst these laws, provisions respecting the lands conquered by the Barbarians, or their relations with the ancient inhabitants of the country:—some attempts were made to regulate their new condition; but the basis of the greater part of these laws is the ancient mode of life, the ancient situation of the Germans; they were inapplicable to a new society, and contributed little towards its development.

In Italy, and in the south of Gaul, a different system was attempted. Roman society had been less destroyed there than elsewhere. To a certain extent, order and vitality yet subsisted in

the cities; and it was there that civilization endeavoured to arise. When we contemplate, for instance, the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, under Theodoric, we see that, even under the government of a barbarian king and people, the municipal system was revived, and exercised its influence over the general course of events. Roman society had influenced the Goths, and, to a certain point, had assimilated them to itself. The same fact may be discerned in the south of Gaul. It was at the commencement of the sixth century, that a Visigothic king of Toulouse, Alaric, caused the Roman laws to be collected, and, under the name of *Breviarium Aniani*, published a code for his Roman subjects.

In Spain, another power, that of the Church, attempted to restore civilization. Instead of the ancient German assemblies, the military *malla*, the most influential assembly convened in Spain, was the council of Toledo. In this council, although it was attended by many of the most considerable of the laity, the bishops obtained the ascendancy. Read the code of the Visigothic laws: it is by no means a barbarian code, but was evidently compiled by the philosophers of those days,—in fact by the clergy. It abounds in theoretical ideas, in theories foreign to barbarian manners. For example, you are aware that the legislation of the bar-

barians was *personal*, that is to say, that the same law was only applicable to men of the same race. The Roman law governed the Romans, the Frank law governed the Franks; each people had their own law, although united under the same government, and inhabiting the same territory. This is what is denominated *personal legislation*, in contradistinction to the system of *real legislation* founded upon territory. The legislation of the Visigoths was not personal, it was founded on territory. All the inhabitants of Spain, Romans, or Visigoths, were subjected to the same law. Continue your investigation, you will meet with still more evident traces of philosophy amongst these barbarians. Individuals possessed according to their station, a determined and relative value; the Barbarian, the Roman, the freeman, and the *Leude*, were not all estimated at the same price;—there was a *tariff* of their existence. The principle of the equal value of every individual in point of law, was established in the Visigothic code. Consider also, the mode of administering those laws. Instead of the oath of the *Compurgatores*, instead of the judicial combat; was established, proof by evidence, a rational examination of the fact, such as would be required in a civilized society. In a word, the Visigothic code of laws has a learned, systematic, and

social character. We feel, it is the work of the same clergy who ruled the council of Toledo, and powerfully influenced the government of the country.

In Spain, then, until the invasion of the Saracens, the theocratic principle, was that which endeavoured to restore civilization.

In France, the same attempt was made by another power, by the influence of great men, especially of Charlemagne. Examine his reign, under its different aspects, you will perceive that his prevailing desire, was to civilize his people. Even the wars he undertook had the same object. He was continually in the field, from the south to the north-east, from the Ebro to the Elbe, and Weser. Were these expeditions undertaken from choice, or the sole desire of conquest? By no means. I do not say that Charlemagne systematically designed what he accomplished; that his plans exhibit a profound knowledge of diplomacy and strategie;—but he yielded to an ardent inclination, to the desire of repressing barbarism, and he was occupied during the whole course of his reign in averting the double invasion of the Germans, and Sclavonians in the north, and of the Mussulmans in the south. This is the military character of the reign of Charlemagne; his expeditions against the Saxons, emanated from the same cause, and had the same object.

If you turn from his wars, to his internal government, you will discern a fact of a similar nature;—an attempt to introduce order and unity, into the administration of all the countries he was master of. I do not here make use of the words *kingdom*, or *state*, expressions of too regular a character, and which awaken ideas, not in accordance with the society over which Charlemagne presided. One thing is certain, however, that being the ruler of an immense territory, he was disgusted by the incoherence, rudeness, and anarchy of all that surrounded him; and became desirous to amend such a wretched state of things. He at first laboured to introduce improvement by means of the *missi dominici*, whom he despatched into the different parts of his territory, to observe facts, and communicate to him the result of their observations, and also to effect reforms, where they deemed it necessary;—and afterwards, by means of general assemblies, which he convened with much greater regularity than his predecessors had done, and which he obliged almost all persons of consideration, in his territory, to attend. These were not free assemblies, they did not at all resemble the deliberative assemblies we are acquainted with, — but Charlemagne obtained information in this manner, respecting facts, and availed himself of the

instrumentality of these assemblies, to introduce some degree of regularity and unity amongst his disorganized subjects.

Under whatever point of view you consider the reign of Charlemagne, you will invariably find that it exhibits the same character:—a desire to overcome barbarism, combined with the spirit of civilization. This is apparent in his anxiety to institute schools, his love for the learned, his support of the ecclesiastical power, of every thing in fine, which appeared to him calculated to influence both society, and the individual man.

An attempt of the same nature was made in England, a short time subsequent, by King Alfred.

Thus, from the fifth to the ninth century, the different causes I have indicated as tending to eradicate barbarism, were in operation in different parts of Europe.

Not any one of these attempts succeeded. Charlemagne was unable to establish his great empire, and the system of government he desired to introduce into it. In Spain, the Church did not succeed in establishing the theocratic principle. In Italy, and in the south of Europe, although many attempts were made to restore the Roman civilization, it was not until a much later period, towards the close of the tenth cen-

tury, that it actually regained vigour. Until that epoch, all attempts to eradicate barbarism failed. These attempts were made under the supposition that men were more advanced than they really were. All, notwithstanding their different forms, desired to establish a more extended, or a more regular society, than the distribution of power, and the condition of human intellect permitted. Nevertheless, they were not without effect. At the commencement of the tenth century, the grand empire of Charlemagne, and the splendid councils of Toledo no longer existed; but barbarism was not the less verging towards its fall; and two grand results had been already obtained.

1. The movement of invasion both from the north and south was arrested. After the dismemberment of the empire of Charlemagne, the states founded on the right bank of the Rhine, opposed a strong barrier to the populations which still pressed onwards towards the west. The Normans are an incontestable proof of this. Until this epoch, if we except the tribes that invaded England, maritime invasions were not very frequent, or considerable. It was during the course of the ninth century, that they became general and constant. The reason was, that invasions by land were more difficult to accomplish than formerly. Society

had acquired in that direction, more secure and settled frontiers. That portion of the nomade population, which could not be thrown back, was constrained to betake itself to the sea, and there continue the erratic life. Whatever injury the Norman expeditions may have done in the west, they were much less fatal than the invasions by land, and were much less destructive to the infant society.

In the south the same fact was manifested. The Saracens fortified themselves in Spain, the struggle continued between them and the Christians, but it no longer occasioned the displacement of the population. Saracen bands infested from time to time, the shores of the Mediterranean; but the great progress of Islamism had evidently ceased.

2. The erratic life was abandoned in the interior of the European territory nearly at the same period. Populations became fixed, the relations of mankind were no longer altered by chance or caprice. The inward and moral state of man began likewise to change;—his ideas, his sentiments, like his existence, acquired some degree of stability;—he attached himself to the place he inhabited, to the connexions he had made, to the domains he hoped might descend to his children, to the dwelling destined one day to become his castle, to the miserable collection

of *coloni* and slaves who laid the foundation of a village. In all parts, inconsiderable societies were formed ; small states, proportioned (if we may so express it) to the standard of the wisdom and intelligence of mankind at that epoch. Amongst these societies, was introduced by degrees, the bond, of which barbarian manners contained the principle ;—the bond of a confederation, which did not destroy individual independence. Each man of importance, established himself in his domain, alone with his family and servants ; but a certain graduation of services and of rights was established between all the military proprietors scattered over the territory. What was this system, gentlemen ? It was the feudal system, which definitively arose from the depths of barbarism. It was natural that the Germanic element should be the first to prevail in our civilization. Power actually belonged to it, for it had subdued Europe, and that element was certain to impress on European civilization its first form, its earliest social organization. This actually occurred.

Feudality,—its character, the part it performed in the history of European civilization, will be the subject of our next lecture ;—and in the bosom of the victorious feudal system, we shall at every step recognise the other elements of our society ; monarchy, the church,

and communes ; and we shall prognosticate their final triumph ; notwithstanding that during their prolonged conflict they assumed the feudal form.

LECTURE IV.

GENTLEMEN,

We have studied the state of Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire, during the first, or barbarous period of modern history. We have proved that at the close of this period, at the commencement of the tenth century, the feudal system was the first principle, the earliest system that became developed, and acquired a preponderance in European society ;—the first which issued from the barbarian state. Feudality therefore will be the subject of our studies to-day.

I think it scarcely necessary to remind you that we are not now considering merely the history of events. In order to accomplish the object I have in view, I need not describe the progress of feudality. The history of civilization, is that which now occupies us ; the history of that general and secret fact which we endea-

your to trace through the exterior facts that surround it. On this account, the events, the social crises, the different stages through which society has passed, only interest us so far, as they are connected with the development of civilization: we ought to inquire how far they have retarded or forwarded it, what they have contributed, what they have withheld from it. It is only under this point of view, that we propose to consider the feudal system.

At the commencement of this course, we defined the general nature of civilization. We recognised the elements of which it is composed; we admitted that it consists, first, in the development of man as an individual—of humanity. Secondly, in the development of the visible condition of mankind—of society. Whenever, therefore, a general condition of the world, an event, a system, is brought under our observation, we ought to make this twofold inquiry: Has it advanced or retarded the development of man? Has it advanced or retarded the development of society?

You are aware, gentlemen, that during the course of this investigation, it will be impossible for us to avoid entering on the great questions of moral philosophy. If we wish to discover how far an event or a system, has contributed to the development of man, and to that of society; we must comprehend what is the *true* development

of society, and of man,—what forms of development are deceptive and illegitimate; pervert, instead of ameliorating; and cause a retrograde, instead of a progressive movement.

We will not, gentlemen, seek to elude the necessity for this labour. Were we to do so, we should not only mutilate and abase our own ideas as well as historical facts; but in the present state of the world, we are constrained to accept frankly the inevitable alliance between philosophy and history. This is one of the characteristics, perhaps the distinguishing characteristic, of our epoch. We are compelled to study together, to reconcile,—science and reality—theory and practice—truth and fact. Until our own day these principles have been separated,—the world has constantly beheld theory and practice following different paths, without recognising, or at least without encountering each other. Therefore, whenever it was desired to introduce opinions and general ideas into the world, and to cause them to influence events,—it became necessary to call in the aid, and oblige them to assume the form of fanaticism. The government of human societies and the direction of their affairs have, until now, been divided between the two influences I have named. On one side, are found enthusiasts; men of general ideas and principles; fanatics;—on the other, the opponents of theoretical opinions,

those who are governed solely by circumstances ; practical men, freethinkers, as they were called in the seventeenth century. This state of things, gentlemen, has in our days ceased to exist : — neither fanatics or freethinkers will be all-powerful in future. In order to govern mankind, and obtain ascendancy over them, it has now become necessary to be acquainted with, and to understand, both theory and practice ; to comprehend and apply principles and facts ; to respect truth and necessity ; to avoid equally the blind presumption of the fanatics, and the no less blind contempt of the freethinkers. This is the point to which the development of the human mind, and of the social state, has conducted us. The human mind, elevated and enlightened, comprehends more distinctly the general nature of circumstances, is able to direct its attention to every subject, and to combine the most discordant ideas and facts. Society, on the other hand, has become so far perfected, that it is able to bear the light of truth ;—it has become possible to reconcile facts with principles ; without (notwithstanding their great imperfection) occasioning discouragement by the comparison between them, or inspiring invincible disgust. I shall therefore follow the plan most agreeable to the period in which we live ; I shall consult its natural tendency, its moral necessity ;—and shall

constantly pass from the examination of circumstances to that of ideas—from the exposition of facts to the consideration of doctrines. Perhaps there may also be in the existing, though evanescent, disposition of human intellect, an additional reason in favour of this method. For some time past a considerable taste—I should say a predilection—has been manifested amongst us for facts, for practical investigation, for all that is positive in human affairs. We had so long been subjected to the despotism of general ideas, of theories, which in some instances cost us so dear, that we have almost learnt to distrust them. We now prefer adhering to facts; to special circumstances—to the application of those circumstances and facts. Do not, gentlemen, let us complain of this. It is a new mode of progression, it is a great step towards knowledge, and the establishment of truth—provided we refrain from allowing ourselves to be possessed, carried away, by this disposition—provided we do not forget that truth alone is privileged to reign over the world, that facts are valueless; unless they are true, and tend to establish truth; and that all true greatness proceeds from the mind, its never-failing source. The civilization of our own country, gentlemen, possesses this peculiar characteristic—it has never been deficient in intellectual grandeur; it has always been rich in ideas; the power of the

human mind has been great in French society—greater, perhaps, than any where else. We must not suffer it to lose this noble prerogative—we must not allow it to descend into the subaltern, and more material condition, which characterizes other societies. Intelligence, and abstract principles, must still hold in France, at least, the same place they have held until now.

I shall therefore not avoid general and philosophical questions; I shall not seek them; but, when introduced by facts, I shall discuss them without hesitation or embarrassment. I shall have occasion to do this more than once, in considering the feudal system, in its relations with the history of European civilization.

The universal establishment of the feudal system, gentlemen, is a satisfactory proof that in the tenth century, it was necessary, and the only practicable social state. In every country where barbarism declined, feudality was implanted. At first every thing seemed to portend the triumph of anarchy. Unity and general civilization disappeared; on every side society became dismembered; and a multitude of small societies, obscure, isolated, and incoherent, were raised. Contemporary writers bewailed what they considered the total dissolution of society—a universal chaos. Consult either the poets or chroniclers of those days; they all believed the end of the world was approaching. But it

was, in fact, the commencement of a new and veritable society—the feudal society—which was so necessary, so inevitable, and so decidedly the only possible consequence of the previous condition of the world, that its form was universally adopted, and it became every where prevalent. Elements the most foreign to this system—the church, the communes, and royalty were constrained to adopt it;—churches became suzerains, or vassals; cities had their lords, or their vassals; and even royalty concealed itself under the name of suzerainty. Every thing was given in fief; not only lands, but certain privileges—such as the privilege of cutting wood in the forests, and the privilege of fishing. Churches gave their casual revenues in fief, even their baptismal dues, and the fees derived from the churching of women; water and money were granted in fief;—the most trifling details, the slightest occurrences of ordinary life, as well as all the general elements of society, were comprehended in the feudal scheme, and became subject to feudality.

When we thus see the feudal form obtain in this manner an universal supremacy, we are at first inclined to believe that the vital and essential principle of feudality also universally prevailed, But this, gentlemen, would be a great error. Although they were invested with the feudal form, those institutions, those elements of society

which were not analogous to the feudal system, did not renounce their nature, and their peculiar principles. The feudal church did not cease to be animated and governed by the theocratic principle; and, in order to make that principle prevail, she laboured incessantly, sometimes assisted by royalty, sometimes by the people, sometimes by the pope, to destroy that system, of which (if we may so express it) she wore the livery. It was the same with royalty and the communes: in the first the monarchical, in the second the democratic principle, continued—though secretly—to govern. Notwithstanding their feudal trappings, all these various elements of European society continually endeavoured to deliver themselves from a form incongruous to their true nature, and to assume that which accorded with their peculiar and vital principles.

We must not, therefore, conclude that, because the feudal *form* was every where prevalent, the feudal *principle* was also universal; and we must not study feudality without distinction, wherever its form appears. In order to comprehend and understand this system—in order to unravel, and judge of its effects on modern civilization—it must be studied where both the principle, and the form, harmonize—in the hierarchy of the laical possessors of fiefs, in the association of the conquerors of

Europe. It is there that feudal society actually resided, and it is there we ought to study it.

I lately spoke of the importance of moral questions, and of the necessity of not eluding any of them. There is a second order of considerations entirely opposed to the former, and which in general has been too much neglected—I mean the material condition of society, and the material changes introduced into the customs and existence of mankind, by a new fact, a new social state, or a revolution. Sufficient attention has not been paid to these considerations; it has not been sufficiently inquired how far these grand crises of the world, have modified the material life and the material relations of mankind. These modifications have more influence on society collectively, than is generally believed. It is well known how much the question of the influence of climate has been studied, and what great importance Montesquieu attached to it. If we confine ourselves to the direct influence of climate on mankind, perhaps it is less than has been supposed; it is, at least, vague, and difficult of appreciation. But the indirect influence of climate, that which results (for instance) from the facts, that in a hot country men live in the open air, while in cold countries they remain in the interior of their habitations; that they subsist on different

kinds of food in various places :—these are facts of extreme importance, which, by a simple change in the material life, powerfully influence civilization. Every great revolution produces modifications of this nature in the social state, which merit a most careful consideration.

The establishment of the feudal system produced a change, the importance of which ought not to be overlooked—for it changed the distribution of the population over the face of the country. Until then, the rulers of the territory—the sovereign class—were collected in masses, more or less numerous, leading a sedentary life in the interior of towns, or wandering in bands over the country. After the rise of feudality, these same men lived isolated, in their own dwellings, at great distances from each other. You cannot doubt that this change must have exercised a great influence on the character and progress of civilization. The social preponderance; the government of society; passed suddenly from the cities to the country: private property, and private life, acquired an ascendancy over public. This was the first effect—an effect purely material—of the triumph of feudal society. The deeper we investigate this fact, the more important will its consequences appear.

Examine this society in its own nature, and consider how far it was likely to affect civilization. Let us first consider feudality in its

simplest form, in its primitive and fundamental form. Let us imagine a single possessor of a fief in his domain, and consider what will be the condition, what will be the employments, of those who compose the small society, which is formed around him.

He establishes himself on an elevated and isolated scite, which he takes care to render strong and secure;—he erects there what he denominates his castle. With whom does he establish himself? With his wife, his children—perhaps with some freemen who not having become proprietors, attach themselves to his person, and continue to live with him, and eat at his table. These all inhabit the interior of the castle. Around, at its base, are grouped a small population of *coloni*, or cultivators, and serfs, who labour on the domains of the possessor of the fief. Amongst this humble population religion appears, founds a church, and introduces a priest. In the early periods of the feudal system, this priest was generally at the same time chaplain of the castle and curé of the village. But the two characters were afterwards separated, and the village possessed its own priest, who dwelt beside his church. This is the elementary feudal society—the feudal *molecule*, if we may so express it. This is the element we have first to examine. We will put to it the twofold question which ought to be ad-

dressed to all facts. What have been its results as regards the development—1st, of man; 2dly, of society?

We may put this question to the limited society I have just described, and be satisfied with the replies it furnishes; for it is the type, the faithful image of feudal society in its most extended form. The lord, the people on his domains, and the priest;—such is feudality, both on a grand and a small scale; when royalty and towns,—elements distinct and foreign to its nature, have been separated from it.

The first fact which strikes us in considering this little society, is the prodigious importance the possessor of the fief must assume in his own eyes, and in those of the persons who surround him. The sentiment of personality, of individual liberty, was the governing principle of barbarian life. It is far different here. It is not the liberty of the individual, it is the importance of the proprietor, of the head of the family, of the master, that is thought of. From this situation, a feeling of immense superiority must have arisen:—of a peculiar superiority very different from every thing that is met with in other forms of civilization. Here is a proof of it. I will take for example, in the ancient world, a Roman patrician:—like the feudal lord, the Roman patrician was the head of his family, the master, and superior, of his household.

Moreover, he was a religious magistrate, a priest, in the interior of his family. But the importance of a religious magistrate is communicated to him *from without*; it is not a purely personal or individual importance, he receives it from heaven; he is the delegate of the Divinity, the interpreter of the religious ideas, entertained respecting God, in the society to which he belongs. The Roman patrician, was besides a member of a corporation which lived united together in his own city;—he was a member of the senate, and thus acquired (also *from without*) importance of a different nature:—an importance which belonged to his corporation, and was transmitted to him by it. The grandeur of the ancient aristocrats, who united both a political and a religious character, belonged to the situation, to the general corporation, rather than to the individual. That of the possessor of a fief is purely individual; it is unconnected with others—all his authority, all his rights, emanate from himself alone. He is not a religious magistrate, he does not form part of a senate, it is in his own person, in his individual self, that all his importance is centred. Every thing that he is, he is by himself, and in his own name. What influence such a situation, must exercise on him who occupies it! What personal haughtiness, what prodigious pride, what insolence even, must arise in his mind! Above him no superior of whom he is the representative, and interpreter; no equal

near him ; no vigorous and universal law to restrain him, no outward authority to control his will ;—he knows no check, but the limits of his power, and the presence of danger. Such are the moral results of the situation, on the character of the individual.

I pass on to a second consequence, important also and too little noticed : the peculiar bias of the feudal *esprit de famille*.

Let us glance at the different family systems. Let us consider first, the patriarchal family, of which we find the model in the bible, and other oriental writings. This family is very numerous,—in fact a tribe. The chief, the patriarch, lives there in common with his children, his nearest relations (the different generations of whom are collected around him), all his kindred and servants ;—and not only does he live with them, but he has the same interests, the same occupations, and leads the same life. Is not his the condition of Abraham, of the patriarchs,—of the chiefs of the Arab tribes, who present at this day, a faithful picture of patriarchal life ?

We are acquainted with another family-system, that of the *clan* ;—a small society, of which the type must be sought for, in Scotland and Ireland ; though it is probable a considerable portion of the European world, has passed through this social form. The clan, is very different from the patriarchal family. There is

a great inequality between the condition of the chief, and the rest of the population—he does not lead the same life;—the greater number cultivate the lands and serve the chief, but he remains unemployed, unless occupied by war. But all the members of the clan have a common origin, they bear the same name;—relationship, ancient traditions, recollections, and similar affections, establish amongst them a moral tie, a sort of equality.

These are the two principal types of family society, which history presents to us. Does the feudal family, resemble either of them? Certainly not. At first sight it appears to bear some affinity to the clan, but the difference is very great. The population which surrounds the possessor of the fief, are entirely unconnected with him; they do not bear his name; there is not any relationship; any historical or moral bond to unite them. The feudal family, has still less resemblance to the patriarchal. The possessor of the fief, does not lead the same life, does not occupy himself so laboriously as those by whom he is surrounded: he is idle, or engaged in war, while those around him are labourers. The feudal family is not numerous: it does not form a tribe; it is reduced to the family in its most restricted sense, to the wife and children of the chief; it lives secluded from the rest of the population in the interior of the

castle. The *coloni*, the serfs, do not form a part of it,—their origin is different; the inequality in their condition immense. Five or six individuals inheriting a situation, at once superior to, and unconnected with, those beneath them, constitute the feudal family. It must evidently become impressed with a peculiar character. It is restricted, concentrated, incessantly obliged to defend itself, to mistrust,—at least to separate itself—from all, even from its own servants. Private life, domestic manners, must necessarily acquire a great preponderance in such a society. I know that the brutality of the chief, his habit of passing his time either in war or in the chase, opposed a considerable obstacle to the development of domestic society. But that obstacle will be overcome. The chief must habitually return home—there he will find his wife, his children, generally alone; they form his permanent society; they partake his interests, his destiny. It would be impossible that domestic life should not under such circumstances acquire a great ascendancy;—and that it did so, is confirmed by many proofs. Was it not in the heart of the feudal family, that women first acquired some degree of importance? In all the ancient forms of society, —I do not speak of those where the *esprit de famille* did not exist, but in those where it was powerful, in the patriarchal life, for example;—women, did not by any means occupy the same posi-

tion they attained in Europe under the feudal system. They owe this change in their situation, this improvement in their condition, to the development and the necessary preponderance of domestic manners introduced by feudality. The cause of this has been sought in the peculiar customs of the ancient Germans, in a national respect that, in the depths of their forests, it is affirmed they bore to women. On a phrase of Tacitus, German patriotism has assumed an imaginary superiority ;—has supposed that German manners exhibited a primitive and ineffaceable purity in the relations between the sexes. Pure chimeras! Phrases similar to those of Tacitus: sentiments and customs analogous to those of the ancient Germans, are found in the descriptions of numerous observers of savage and barbarous tribes. There is nothing primitive, nothing peculiar to a certain race. The importance of women in Europe, is one of the effects of a strongly determined social condition, of the progress and preponderance of domestic manners ;—and that preponderance very soon became an essential characteristic, of the feudal system.

A second fact, a new proof of the increased importance of domestic life, equally characterizes the feudal family ;—the spirit of hereditary succession, the desire of perpetuity which evidently reigns there. The hereditary spirit is inherent in

the family spirit, but it was nowhere so fully developed as in the feudal system. This was a necessary consequence of the nature of the property with which the family was incorporated. The fief was different from any other description of property. It was essential that it should be continually possessed by a proprietor capable of defending and serving it; acquitting the obligations inherent in the domain; and maintaining it in its rank, amongst the general association of the rulers of the country. From thence proceeded, a certain identification between the actual possessor of the fief; the fief itself; and the entire series, of its future possessors. This circumstance, contributed much to strengthen, to unite family ties; already so powerful, from the very nature of the feudal family.

I now turn from the seigneurial dwelling, to descend amongst the small population which surrounds it. Here, every thing presents a different aspect. The nature of man is so fruitful in good, that whenever any social situation endures for a considerable period; a certain moral tie, sentiments of protection, of benevolence, and affection, inevitably arise between those whom it connects, whatever may be the nature of their connexion. It was thus in the feudal system. There can be no doubt, that after some time, certain moral relations, certain feelings of sympathy would be created between the *coloni*, and the pos-

sessors of the fief. But this occurred notwithstanding the obstacle of their relative situation;—by no means through its influence. Considered in itself, this situation was radically vicious. There was no moral community between the possessor of the fief, and his *coloni*. They formed a part of his domain, they were his property, and in the word *property* were comprehended all the rights, that we term rights of political sovereignty, as well as those of private property;—the right of promulgating laws, of imposing taxes, of awarding punishments, as well as the right of using and selling. There were not between the lord, and the *coloni*, settled on his domains; (so far at least as that can be said, where human beings are concerned), either rights, guarantees, or society.

From thence, I believe, arose the truly prodigious and invincible hatred, which the rural population have always borne to the feudal system; to its recollections; to its very name. There are instances of mankind having endured, and become reconciled to the most oppressive despotisms; nay, of their having voluntarily submitted to them. Theocratic, and monarchical despotism, have on some occasions obtained the acquiescence, almost the affection of the people subjected to them. But feudal despotism has always been rejected, has always been odious. It has weighed down the destinies of men, with-

out ever reigning over their hearts. Why is this ? Because theocracy, and monarchy, exercise authority by virtue of a certain belief, entertained by the master in common with his subjects. He is the representative, the minister of another power, superior to all human powers ;—he speaks and acts in the name of the Divinity, or of a general idea, not in the name of an individual, of a mere man. Feudal despotism, is of another nature ; it is the power of one individual over another,—the domination of the personal and capricious will of a single man. This is, perhaps, the only form of tyranny that man, to his eternal honour, has never voluntarily submitted to. Whenever, in his master, he only recognises a mere man ;—whenever he discovers that the power which constrains him, only proceeds from human will, from the will of an individual being like himself ; he becomes exasperated, and is indignant under the yoke. Such is the true, and distinctive character of feudal power, and such is the origin of the antipathy it has never ceased to inspire.

The religious element associated with it, was not calculated to alleviate its weight. I do not believe that the influence of the priest, in the little society I have just described, was great, nor that it succeeded in rendering legitimate, the relations between the inferior population and their lord. The church exercised a very

great influence on the progress of European civilization;—but it was by proceeding in a general manner; by changing the general dispositions of mankind. When we minutely examine the little feudal society, we perceive that the influence of the priest, between the lord and the *coloni*, was very limited. The priest was frequently not less rude, and of no higher rank than the serfs; and little fitted to strive against the arrogance of the lord. Without doubt, being the only person whose duty it was to endeavour to develop and cherish the moral life, amongst the inferior population; he was useful, and dear to them on that account;—he imparted to them some degree of information, some consolation, but he did little to ameliorate their condition; indeed, I think it was not possible for him to do much to improve it.

I have examined the elementary feudal society:—I have placed before you the principal consequences which would naturally result from it, both as regards the possessor of the fief; his family; and the population collected around him. Let us now pass beyond this narrow boundary. The population of the fief did not exist alone on the territory, there were other societies analogous, or opposed to it, with which it was connected. What did it then become? What influence might this general society be

expected to exercise on the civilization to which it belonged?

A short observation is necessary, before we reply. It is true, that the possessor of the fief and the priest, each belonged to a general society; they had many connexions in the world, and frequent intercourse with it. It was very different with the *coloni*, and the serfs. Whenever, to designate the rural population at that epoch, we employ a general term, which appears to indicate a single and universal form of society, of the word *people* for example—we speak incorrectly. This population was not included in any general society:—its existence was purely local. Beyond the territory they inhabited, the *coloni* had no social relations;—they were unconnected, both with persons, and things. They had no common destiny; no common country—they did not form a nation. When we speak of the feudal system collectively, we mean only the possessors of fiefs.

Let us consider, what were the relations of the small feudal society, with the general society of which it formed a part; and what effects these relations would have on the development of civilization.

You all know, gentlemen, by what ties, the population of fiefs, were united amongst themselves; what conditions were attached to their properties, what were the obligations,—on one

part, of service ; and on the other, of protection. I shall not enter into a detail of these obligations :—it is sufficient you should have a general idea of them. They would naturally produce, in the mind of each possessor of a fief, certain ideas, and moral sentiments,—ideas of duty, and sentiments of affection. It is a well ascertained fact, that the principles of fidelity, of devotedness, of adherence to engagements, and every sentiment of a similar nature, were developed and preserved, by the mutual relations, between the possessors of fiefs.

An attempt was made to convert these sentiments, duties, and obligations, into rights, and institutions. Every one knows, that feudality endeavoured to define legally, what services the possessor of the fief, owed to his suzerain, what reciprocal services, he might expect in return ;—in what cases the vassal was compelled to aid his suzerain, with arms, or money ; in what form the suzerain ought to obtain from his vassals, those services, to which the mere act of possessing their fiefs, did not oblige them. It was endeavoured to secure these rights ; by means of institutions, calculated to inspire respect. On this account, the seignorial courts of judicature, were instituted to administer justice between the possessors of fiefs ; whenever complaints were brought before their common suzerain. For the same reason every lord, of any consequence,

assembled his vassals, in council, to treat with them of those affairs which required either their consent, or concurrence. In a word, there was a union of military, political, and judiciary means; through which it was attempted to organize the feudal system, and to convert the mutual relations of the possessors of fiefs, into rights, and institutions.

But there was no reality, in these rights and institutions:—no political guarantee.

When we inquire what constitutes a guarantee:—what a political guarantee really is; we are led to conclude, that its fundamental character, is the constant presence amidst society, of a disposition, of a force; possessing both the means, and the power, to impose laws on individual powers, and wills; and to cause them all to observe the common rule, to respect the general law.

There are only two systems of political guarantees:—either an individual, must possess a power, and a will, so strongly expressed, so superior to those of others; that he may be able to subdue all that oppose, or come into collision with him;—or there must be, a public power, a public will, resulting from the concurrence, and development of the wills of individuals; and, which is equally capable, when once displayed, of overcoming all opposition, and making itself universally respected, and obeyed.

Such are the only two systems of political guarantees. The despotism of an individual, of a corporation ;—or, free government. If we consider every system that has existed, we shall find that they may all be included, under one, or other of these forms.

But gentlemen, neither of them, existed, or could exist in the feudal system.

Without doubt, the possessors of fiefs, were not all equal. There were some, much more powerful than others ; and many sufficiently powerful, to oppress the weakest. There was not one, not even the highest of the suzerains—the king—who was able to impose laws, on all the others, and to make himself generally obeyed. Recollect, that all the permanent means of power, and action, were wanting :—there was no standing army, no permanent taxes, no permanent tribunals. Social institutions, and authorities, were in some measure, obliged to commence afresh, to be reconstructed whenever they were needed. It was necessary to institute tribunals for each particular process, to raise an army for every war, to obtain a revenue whenever money was required. Every thing was occasional, accidental, special :—none of the means of government, were central, permanent, or independent. It is clear, that in such a system, no individual had the power of compelling all others to conform to his will ; and respect the general law.

On the other hand, resistance was as easy, as repression was difficult. Under the shelter of his castle, having to deal with very few enemies, and being certain to find other vassals, similarly situated, ready to coalesce with, and support him—the possessor of the fief, defended himself without difficulty.

Here then, we see that the first system of political guarantees;—the system which makes them consist in the intervention of the most powerful,—is shown to be impracticable under the feudal system.

The other system,—that of free government, of a public power, of a public force,—was equally impracticable, it could never have been produced by feudality. The cause of this is simple. When we now speak of public authority; of what we term the rights of sovereignty;—the right of giving laws, of taxing, and of punishing,—we know, we are assured; that these rights do not belong to any individual; that no one has individually a right to punish others, to levy a tax, or to impose a law. These rights belong to society collectively, and are exercised in its name, —they are not even inherent in society, but are delegated to it by a higher power. Therefore, when any individual, comes into collision, with the power invested, with these rights, the feeling which (perhaps unconsciously) prevails in his mind; is, that he is in the presence, of a public,

and legitimate power, authorized to govern him ; and to which therefore, he has already, in some measure, secretly submitted himself.

It was entirely different under the feudal system. The possessor of the fief, was invested, with all the rights of sovereignty, within his domain ; and over the people who inhabited it. These rights, were inherent in the domain, and were private property. What we now call public rights, were in those days private rights, what we term public powers, were then private powers. When the possessor of a fief, after having exercised sovereignty, in his own name, as proprietor, over the entire population amongst whom he lived ; attended an assembly, a parliament, held by his suzerain,—a parliament, in general, composed of a limited number of individuals, his equals, or nearly so—he did not enter that assembly, he did not leave it, with the idea, that it possessed public authority. This idea, was contrary to the whole tenour of his existence, to all he practised in the interior of his domains. He only saw in that assembly ; men, invested with the same rights as himself, filling the same situation, and acting like himself, by virtue of their own personal authority. Nothing induced, nothing forced him to recognise, in the highest offices of the state, in the institutions, we now term public ; that character, of superiority, of generality, inherent in the idea we form of political power.

Hence, if he was dissatisfied with the decision of such a tribunal, he refused to submit to it, and called in the aid of force to resist it.

Force, under the feudal system, was the true, and habitual guarantee of right—if indeed, force may be denominated a guarantee. Recourse was incessantly had to force, in order to make rights respected and recognised. No institution availed any thing. This was so well understood, that no person thought of applying to institutions. If the seigneurial courts, and the councils, or provincial diets, had been in an effective condition, we should find them much more active; they would have been much more frequently assembled, than we learn from history they were. Their infrequency, proves their inefficiency.

We need not be surprised at this. Another cause for it existed, more profound and decisive than any I have hitherto mentioned.

Of all the systems of government, and of political guarantees;—the most difficult to establish, and to render efficient, is without doubt, the federative system. This system, consists, in allowing each locality, each particular society, to retain the administration of its own affairs;—with the single exception, that such a portion of power as may be indispensable to the maintenance of the general society, is transferred to the centre of that society, and there constitutes a central government. The federative system,—

in theory, the most simple; is in fact, the most complex:—in order to reconcile the independence, the local liberty, it permits; with the general order, the general submission, it exacts, and supposes, in certain cases; it is evident, that a high degree of civilization is required—the human will, and individual liberty, must mutually aid each other, and concur, in introducing, and maintaining this system,—and their concurrence, is so much the more necessary, because this form of government, has less powerful means of coercion, than any other.

The federative system, therefore, evidently demands, the fullest development of reason, morality, and civilization; in any society which adopts it. Feudality, nevertheless attempted to establish this system:—it was in fact, an actual federation. It was founded on the same principles, which now form the basis of the federation of the United States of America. Its object, was to leave in the hands of each lord, the principal powers of administration, and sovereignty; and to transfer to the suzerain, or to the general assembly of barons, the most limited possible portion of power; and this, only in cases of imperative necessity. You will readily comprehend the impracticability of establishing such a system, amidst ignorance, and brutal passions;—or in a word, while the moral condition of mankind, continued so imperfect, as it was during

the feudal ages. The nature even of this form of government, was opposed to the ideas, and the manners of the individuals, who would have been subjected to it. Who can then be astonished by the ill success, of this attempt at organization ?

We have considered feudal society, 1st, in its most simple, and fundamental element, 2dly, in its complete form. We have endeavoured, under these two points of view, to trace, what it has performed, what it might have been expected to do, and what was the nature of its influence on the progress of civilization :—the following are the results, at which in my opinion we have arrived.

1st : Feudality, was certain to exercise a considerable, and taking it altogether, a salutary influence on the intellectual development of individuals. It excited in the soul ; energetic ideas, and sentiments ; moral wants ; and noble developments of character, and passion.

2dly : Under a social point of view, it was incapable of maintaining legal order, or establishing political guarantees :—it was indispensable, as a means of renewing society in Europe ; which had been so greatly dissolved by barbarism, that it was unable to assume, a more regular, or extended form :—but, the feudal form, radically vicious in its own nature ; was incapable of being extended, or regularized. The only political

right, that the feudal system introduced into European society, is the right of resistance. I do not say legal resistance; that was out of the question in a society so little advanced. It is the especial mark of the progress of society, to substitute,—on one side, public authority, for individual will;—on the other, legal, for individual resistance. This is the principle, and the great perfection of social order; much latitude is allowed to personal liberty, but when personal liberty transgresses, when it becomes necessary to restrain it; the public voice, the public intelligence, is appealed to, to carry into effect any coercive measures, that may be adopted against the liberty of the individual. Such is the system, of legal order, and of legal resistance. You will readily comprehend, that under the feudal system nothing like this existed. The right of resistance which the feudal system maintained, and practised, is the right of personal resistance, a terrible, and insocial right, for it appeals to war, the destruction of society:—yet it is a right which ought never to be annihilated in the human mind, for its annihilation, would condemn mankind to slavery.

The sentiment of the right of resistance, perished in the degeneracy of Roman society, and was unable to arise from its ruins;—did it neither in my estimation, naturally proceed from the principles of the Christian society. Feudality, was

the means of reintroducing it, amidst the customs, of Europe. It is the boast of civilization, to render it inactive, and unnecessary,—it is the boast of the feudal system, to have constantly professed, and defended it.

Such is, gentlemen, if I am not greatly mistaken; the result of an examination of feudal society, considered in itself, in its general elements, and independently of its historical development. If we pass on to facts, to history, we shall perceive that every thing occurred exactly as might be anticipated:—that the feudal system performed all it was capable of doing, and that its destiny, was conformable to its nature. Events may be adduced as proofs, that all the conjectures I have formed, all the conclusions I have drawn from the very nature of this system are well founded.

Let us cast our eyes, over the general history of feudality, from the tenth to the thirteenth century:—it is impossible to doubt, that it exercised a great, and salutary influence, on the personal development of man, on the development of his sentiments, his character, and his ideas. We cannot open any part of the history of those times, without being struck by the noble sentiments, the great actions, the splendid developments of humanity, which evidently proceeded from the genius of feudal manners. Chivalry bore no actual resemblance to the feudal system; yet it was its

legitimate offspring ;—from feudality, emanated that ideal of noble, generous, and loyal sentiments : which bears witness in favour of its progenitor.

Turn your attention to another subject. The first impulses of imagination in Europe, the first essays of poetry, and literature, the first intellectual pleasures, that Europe enjoyed on emerging from barbarism, sprung up under the shelter, under the wings of feudality. It was in the interior of the castles, that they were called into being. This form of human development, requires excitement, both of the soul, and of life ; leisure ; a thousand conditions which cannot be met with in the toilsome, melancholy, rude and harsh existence of the common people. In France, in England, in Germany, in all Europe, the first literary recollections, the first intellectual enjoyments, date their existence from the feudal ages.

If, on the other hand, we consult history, on the social influence of feudality, we shall find—in accordance with our conjectures—that the feudal system, was equally opposed to general order, and to the extension of individual liberty. Under whatever aspect, you consider the progress of society, the feudal system will always appear an obstacle to advancement. Therefore, from the commencement of feudal society, the two powers, which govern the development of order, and liberty ;—on one hand, the monarchical, on the

other the popular power,—royalty, and the people,—have constantly attacked, and have incessantly fought against it. Some attempts were made, at different epochs, to regularize it, to render it in some measure a general, and legal condition:—in England by William the Conqueror, and his sons, in France by Saint Louis, in Germany by several of the emperors. All these attempts, all these efforts, failed. The very nature of feudal society, is incompatible with order, and legality. In modern times some men of talent have endeavoured to depict feudality, as a social system,—they wished to recognise in it, a legal, organized, and progressive state of things; they imagined it, a golden age. But ask them, when this happy period existed; require them to assign to it, a place, a time;—they cannot do so;—it is an Utopia without date, a drama of past days, without either a theatre, or actors. The cause of this error is very obvious; and it explains, at the same time, the mistake of those who cannot pronounce the name of feudality, without execration. Neither of these parties, have taken the pains to consider, the twofold aspect which feudality presents, they have not distinguished—on one hand, its influence on the individual development of man, on his sentiments, his character, his passions—on the other its influence on the social condition. One party cannot imagine, that a social system, in which so many noble sentiments, so many

virtues were found, in which every form of literature arose, in which manners acquired some grandeur, and elevation; was so pernicious, so fatal, as it is depicted. Others, considering only the evils, that feudality, inflicted on the mass of the population, and the obstacles it opposed to the establishment of order, and of liberty, have been unable to believe, that such a system could produce noble characters, great virtues, or conduce to advancement, in any manner whatsoever. They have both failed to comprehend the double element of civilization; they have not recognised that it consists in two forms of development,—one of which may be produced, and may exist for some time independent of the other,—although after the lapse of ages; after a long series of facts has intervened, they must inevitably introduce, and establish each other.

In fine, gentlemen, feudality fulfilled its destiny—it performed all that could be expected from it. Individuality,—the energy of personal existence, was the distinguishing characteristic of the conquerors of the Roman world:—the development of the personal principle, was consequently the necessary, and primary result of the social system, founded by, and for them. That which man himself introduces, into any social system, when he first enters it,—his intellectual, and moral disposition, have a powerful influence, on his situation. His situation, in the same manner,

reacts on these dispositions, — develops, and strengthens them. The personal principle possessed the ascendancy, in German society. Feudal society, its legitimate offspring, revealed its origin by advancing the development of man as an individual.

The same fact will be apparent, in the different elements of civilization,—they all remained faithful to their principles, they propelled the world, and caused it to advance in the same direction, as themselves. In our next réunion the history of the Church, and its influence on European civilization, from the fifth to the twelfth century, will furnish us with a new, and striking example of this fact.

LECTURE V.

GENTLEMEN,

We have examined, the nature, and influence of the feudal system ;—we shall to-day consider that of the Christian Church, from the fifth to the twelfth century. I say of the *Church*,—for as I observed before, it is not of Christianity, as a religious system, but of the Church, as an ecclesiastical society ; of the Christian clergy ; that I propose to treat.

In the fifth century, this society, was almost completely organized. It has undergone since that epoch, numerous and important changes ;—but it may be affirmed, that at that time, the Church,—considered as a corporation ; as the government of the Christian world,—had attained a perfect, and independent existence.

A single glance is sufficient to convince us of the immense disparity that existed between the state of the Church, in the fifth century ; and

that of the other elements of European civilization. I have shown, that the municipal, and feudal systems, monarchy, and the Church, are the fundamental elements of our civilization. The municipal system, in the fifth century was only a fragment of the Roman empire,—a shadow, without life, or form. The feudal system had not then issued out of chaos. Monarchy, existed only in name. All the civil elements of modern society, were in a state of decay, or of infancy. The Church alone, was at that period, both youthful and regularly constituted :—she alone, had acquired a definite form, and retained all her pristine vigour ;—she alone, was governed at the same time by the principle of progression, and that of order ;—by energy and system ; the two great means of influence. Is it not through the moral life, and moral advancement on one side ; —and through order and discipline on the other, that institutions are enabled to acquire ascendancy, over society ? The Church, moreover had agitated all the grand questions, which interest man—she had occupied herself, respecting the problems of his nature, all the accidents of his destiny. Therefore her influence, over modern civilization, was very great ;—greater perhaps, than even her most inveterate adversaries, or her warmest defenders, have represented. Occupied either with serving, or attacking her ;

they only considered her influence under a polemical point of view; and did not in my opinion judge her with equity, or consider how far her influence extended.

The Church appears in the fifth century, an independent and organized society, interposed between the masters of the world, the sovereigns, the possessors of temporal power; and the people,—influencing all, and forming the bond of their union.

In order to comprehend, and completely understand, in what manner the Church acted on society; we shall consider her, under three different aspects. 1st: in her own nature, what she was, the form of her internal constitution, the principles which governed that constitution, and its character. 2dly: in her relations with temporal sovereigns; with kings, nobles, and other dignitaries:—finally, in her relations with the people. And, when this threefold inquiry, shall have presented us, with a complete picture of the Church; of her principles, her situation, the influence she must necessarily have exercised:—we shall verify our assertions by history, we shall search if facts, if events, from the fifth to the twelfth century, are in accordance with the results to which the study of the nature of the Church, and of her relations with the rulers of the world, and with the people, may have led.

We will first study the Church in herself, in her internal condition, in her peculiar nature.

The first fact, which strikes us—and perhaps the most important of all,—is the fact of her existence; the existence of a religious government, of a clergy, of a religion taught by the priesthood.

In the opinion of many enlightened men, the very mention of an ecclesiastical corporation; of a priesthood, of a religious government, appears to decide the question. They think that any religion which has been able to organize a body of priests, and a regularly constituted clergy,¹—in a word, an established religion,—is certain, taking every thing into consideration, to be pernicious, rather than useful. According to such persons, religion, is a purely spiritual connexion between God, and man; and whenever it loses this character, whenever an outward authority is interposed between the individual, and the object of his religious adoration,—that is, God;—religion changes its nature, and society is endangered.

We cannot, gentlemen, avoid examining this question. In order to comprehend, what influence the Christian Church exercised;—we must understand what would necessarily be the influence of a Church, and of a clergy, from the nature of the institution itself. In order to ap-

preciate this influence, we must previously inquire, if religion, is in fact purely individual, if it merely excites, and creates a spiritual connection, between each individual, and God,—or whether it does not necessarily become, the origin of new relations between them, which will inevitably produce a religious society, and consequently, a government of that society.

If we reduce religion to a purely religious sentiment, to that feeling, which though vague, though uncertain in its object, and almost impossible to characterize, except by name; yet which is so real, which addresses itself sometimes to exterior nature, sometimes to the most secret emotions of the soul; to-day to poetry; to-morrow to the mysteries of the future; which pervades every thing, and restlessly seeks its gratification throughout the universe;—if we reduce religion to this sentiment, it appears evident, that it must, and ought to remain, a purely personal concern. Such a feeling, may cause a momentary association between individuals,—it may, it ought, to delight in sympathy, and be nourished, and strengthened by it. But its vague, and uncertain nature, renders it incapable of becoming the principle of a permanent, and extended association;—of accommodating itself to any system, of precepts, practices, and forms,—in a word,—of producing a society, and a religious government.

But, gentlemen, I am either strangely mistaken, or this religious sentiment, is not the complete expression of the religious nature of man. Religion, as I believe, very different from this; and much more extended.

There are problems, in human nature, in human destinies, which cannot be solved in this life, which depend on an order of things unconnected with the visible world, but which unceasingly agitate the human mind, with a desire to comprehend them. The solution of these problems, is the origin of all religion; her primary object is to discover the creeds, and doctrines, which contain, or are supposed to contain it.

Another cause also impels mankind to embrace religion. To those amongst you who have made some progress in philosophical studies, it must I think be evident, that morals, are independent of religion;—that the distinction between moral good and evil; that the obligation to refrain from evil and to do good; are laws, innate in the human mind, the same as the laws of logic:—their principles originate in himself; and their application is found in his actual life.

But if we admit these facts, if we recognise the independent nature of morals, a question still arises:—from whence do morals originate? whence do they lead? Is this self-existing obligation to do good, an isolated fact, without

an author, without an end? Does it not conceal,—or rather, does it not reveal to man, an origin, a destiny, beyond this world? The science of morals, by these spontaneous, and inevitable questions, conducts man to the threshold of religion, and displays to him a sphere from whence he has not derived it.

Thus, the certain, and never-failing sources of religion, are on one hand, the problems of our nature; on the other, the necessity of seeking for morals, a sanction, an origin, and an aim. It therefore assumes many other forms, besides that of a pure sentiment, such as I have described:—it appears a union—1st, of doctrines, founded on the problems that man experiences in his own nature;—2dly, of precepts which correspond with those doctrines, and give a sanction and signification to natural morality;—3dly, of promises addressed to the future hopes of mankind. This is what truly constitutes religion,—this is its fundamental character,—it is not merely a form of sensibility, an impulse of the imagination, a variety of poetry.

When thus brought back to its true elements, to its essential nature; religion appears no longer a purely personal concern, but a powerful, and fruitful principle of association. Is it considered in the light of a system of belief; a system of dogmas? Truth is not the heritage of any individual, it is absolute, and universal,—mankind

ought to seek, and profess it in common. Is it considered with reference to the precepts that are associated with its doctrines? A law, which is obligatory on a single individual, is so on all; it ought to be promulgated, and it is our duty, to endeavour to bring all mankind under its dominion. It is the same with respect to the promises, that religion makes, in the name of its creeds, and precepts: they ought to be diffused, all men should be invited to partake of their benefits. A religious society therefore, naturally results from the essential elements of religion; and is such a necessary consequence of it, that the term which expresses the most energetic social sentiment, the most intense desire to propagate ideas, and extend society, is the word *proselytism*; a term, which is especially applied to religious belief, and in fact appears consecrated to it.

When a religious society has once been formed, when a certain number of men are united by a common religious creed, are governed by the same religious precepts, and enjoy the same religious hopes; some form of government is necessary. No society can endure a week, nay more, no society, can endure a single hour, without a government. The moment a society is formed, indeed, by the very fact of its formation, it calls forth a government:—a government, which shall proclaim the common truth which is the bond of the society, and promulgate and

maintain the precepts that this truth ought to produce. The necessity of a superior power, of a form of government, is involved in the fact of the existence of a religious, as it is in that of any other society: and not only is a government necessary, but it naturally forms itself. Time does not permit me to explain at length, in what manner governments generally arise, and become established:—I shall content myself by observing, that when events are suffered to follow their natural laws, when force does not interfere, power falls into the hands of the most able, the most worthy; those who are most capable of carrying out the principles on which the society, was founded. Is a warlike expedition in agitation? The bravest take the command. Is the object of the association, learned research, or a scientific undertaking? The best informed will be the leader. In all circumstances when the world is left to its natural course, the natural inequality between men, is openly displayed; and every one assumes the place he is capable of occupying. In religious affairs the same inequality of talents, of faculties, and of gifts, is apparent. One man, may be more fitted than another, to expound religious doctrines, and to cause them to be generally received. Another possesses more authority, in compelling the observance of religious precepts:—another may excel, in exciting, and cherishing religious emotions, and expectations in

the soul. The inequality of faculties, and influence, which is the foundation of power in civil life, has the same effect in a religious society. Missionaries arise, their talent is manifested like that of generals. It follows, that, on one side, a religious government necessarily springs from a religious society,—and on the other, that it becomes naturally developed, through the means of human faculties, and their unequal distribution amongst men. Therefore, religion has no sooner arisen in the human mind, than a religious society appears;—and immediately a religious society is formed, it produces its government.

But an important objection may now be raised. Nothing here, ought to be ordained, imposed, no coercive measures can be legitimate. There is no need of government, because perfect liberty ought here to exist uncontrolled. But, gentlemen, we should form a very low and confined idea of the general nature of government, if we imagined it to consist exclusively, or even to any considerable extent, in its coercive element,—in the force it exerts, to render itself obeyed.

I turn from a religious, to consider a civil government. I ask you to observe the simple progress of facts. Society exists:—something, no matter what, is necessary to be done for its interest, in its name. A law is to be promulgated, measures to be adopted, a judgment to be pronounced. Assuredly a proper method exists, of

satisfying these social wants ; there is a good law to make, a prudent measure to adopt, a right judgment to pronounce. Whatever may be the subject in question, whatever interests may be affected, a truth exists which it is essential to discover—and that truth ought to regulate the conduct which is adopted.

The primary concern of government, is to search for this truth, to ascertain what is just, and reasonable, what is suitable to society. When this truth is discovered, it is proclaimed. An attempt must then be made to introduce it into the popular mind, to cause it to be approved of by those whom it affects, and to persuade them that it is reasonable. Is this coercion? By no means. Suppose, moreover, that the truth which is to decide the question, (no matter what it is,)—suppose, I repeat, that when this truth has been discovered and proclaimed, all minds should be convinced, all wills should be swayed by it ; that all should admit, that the government is right, and should obey it spontaneously :—still, here is no compulsion, no necessity for employing force. Has the government then been totally inactive? Has it had nothing to do in all this? On the contrary, the government has accomplished all it ought to have done. Compulsion is only rendered necessary by the resistance of individuals ; when the ideas that power has adopted, when the part it has taken, are not generally approved of,

are not voluntarily submitted to, by all. Government then employs force, to render itself obeyed. This is the necessary consequence of human imperfection; an imperfection, which, at the same time, resides both in the ruling power, and in the society. It will never be possible, entirely to supersede it; civil governments, will always be compelled to have recourse, to a certain degree, to compulsion. But compulsion evidently does not constitute them; whenever other means are available, it is dispensed with, to the great benefit of all: and the highest perfection of government, is to avoid compulsion, and substitute for it purely moral means, an influence over the understanding. Therefore, that government in which compulsion is least employed, is that, which is most conformable to its true nature, and most completely fulfils its mission. Its power, is not degraded, its functions are not diminished, as it is commonly believed;—its mode of action only is changed, for one infinitely more universal, and powerful. Those governments, which most frequently employ compulsion, are much less effective, than those, in which its exercise is rare. By addressing itself to the mind; by influencing free will; by using purely intellectual means; a government, far from being degraded, becomes extended, and exalted; and is then in a condition to accomplish most, and to perform the greatest actions. On the

contrary, when it is continually obliged to employ compulsion, its power becomes restricted, confined,—it performs little, and that little inefficiently.

Compulsion, the employment of force, is not then, the essential principle of government ;—that principle, chiefly consists, in a system of measures, and powers, conceived for the purpose of ascertaining what ought to be done on every occasion, of discovering the truth which ought to govern the society, in order to introduce it into the popular mind, and cause it to be voluntarily and freely accepted. It is not therefore difficult to imagine, that a government may be necessary, and may exist, although compulsion, is not admitted ; although it should even be absolutely interdicted.

Such, gentlemen, is the government of a religious society. Without doubt, it ought never to employ compulsion ; without doubt, its province being the human conscience, the employment of force, is illegitimate, under whatsoever pretext. But a government, still exists, and has still to perform all the duties I have just enumerated. It ought to discover those religious doctrines, which solve the problems of human destinies ;—or if a general system of belief is already adopted, in which these problems are solved, it ought still in each particular case, to declare the consequences of the system ; it ought to promulgate,

and maintain the precepts, which correspond with its doctrines ; it ought to teach, and inculcate them, in order that if the society deviates from them, they may be recalled to its remembrance. Here is no compulsion ; but inquiry, instruction, and the promulgation of religious truths ; and if necessary, admonition, and censure. This is the office of a religious government ; this is its duty. If you completely suppress coercion, still, all the essential questions respecting the organization of the government, will be debated, and will require solution. The question for instance, whether a body of religious magistrates is indispensable, or if it be possible to trust to the religious inspiration of individuals : — this question, regarding which the quakers, differ from the greater number of religious societies, will always exist, will always create discussion. In like manner the question, supposing that the necessity of a body of religious magistrates be admitted, whether a system of equality is to be preferred, equal privileges and powers, amongst all the ministers of religion, whose deliberations ought to be in common ; or an hierarchical constitution, a graduated scale of power — this question will never cease to be agitated, even though ecclesiastical magistrates of every denomination, should be deprived of all coercive power. Instead then of dissolving religious society, in order to have the right to destroy

religious government; it ought to be remembered, that a religious society is naturally formed, that a religious government, in like manner, naturally results from a religious society, and that the problem to be solved, is on what conditions this government ought to exist, what are its foundations, its principles, what are the conditions of its legitimacy. This is the actual inquiry, which the necessary existence of a religious government as of all others prescribes.

The conditions of legitimacy, are the same, in the government of a religious, as in that of any other society. They may be reduced to two. The first is, that power, should be possessed, and constantly held, at least, so far as imperfection of human affairs permits, by the most excellent, the most able individuals,—that those who are most competent to direct society (*les supériorités légitimes*) and who are dispersed amidst it should be sought for, brought forward, and invited to discover the social law, and to exercise authority. The second is, that power, when legitimately constituted, respects the legitimate liberties of those whom it governs. The two conditions of good government, whether religious, or civil;—are, a proper system for the formation, and organization of power; and a satisfactory guarantee, for liberty. All governments should be judged of, by this criterion.

Instead, then of reproaching the Church, the

government of the Christian world, with her existence, we ought to inquire how that government was constituted, and if its principles, were in accordance, with the essential condition of all good government. Let us consider the Church, under this twofold aspect.

In discussing the mode of the formation, and transmission of power, in the Church, a word has often been used in speaking of the Christian clergy, which I wish to avoid :—I mean the word *caste*. The body of ecclesiastical magistrates, has often been termed a caste. This expression is not correct :—the idea of hereditary succession, is inherent, in the idea, of a caste. Search the world, consider every country, in which the system of castes has prevailed—Egypt, and India, for example—you will every where perceive, that a caste, is essentially hereditary, it is the transmission of the same situation, of the same power, from father to son. Whenever hereditary succession does not exist, there cannot be a caste ; there may be, a corporation :—the *esprit de corps*, may be injurious, but it is very different from the *esprit de caste*. The word *caste* cannot be applied to the Christian Church ; the celibacy of the priests, prevented the Christian clergy from becoming a caste.

You will readily perceive, the consequences of this difference. Privileges, are invariably attached to the system of caste, to the fact of here-

ditary succession. This results from the definition of a caste. When any functions, or powers, become hereditary in a family, it is clear that privileges are attached to them; that no one can acquire them otherwise than by birth. This is actually what has occurred; in all countries, where religious government, has fallen into the hands of a caste, it has become a matter of privilege, it is impossible for any one, excepting those belonging to the families of the caste, to attain to it. Nothing similar to this, is met with in the Christian Church; on the contrary, the Church has constantly maintained as a principle, the equal right of all men, whatever may be their origin, to be admitted, to all employments, to all dignities. The ecclesiastical career, especially from the fifth to the twelfth century, was open to all. The Church was recruited from all ranks, from the lower, as well as from the higher, perhaps more frequently from the former than from the latter. The system of exclusive privileges, pervaded all that surrounded her,—she alone, maintained the principle of equality, of competition,—she alone, invited those most competent to direct society, (*les supériorités légitimes*), to assume possession of power. This is the first great result, that spontaneously flowed from the fact, that the Church was a corporation, not a caste.

This fact, had also another result. There is a spirit inherent in all castes,—the spirit of immuta-

bility. This assertion does not require proof. Search history, you will see that the spirit of immutability has pervaded all societies, political, or religious, where the spirit of caste has prevailed. The fear of progression, it is true at a certain period, and to a certain extent, became introduced into the Christian Church; but we cannot say it acquired a great ascendancy there, we cannot affirm that the Christian Church ever remained stationary, and immovable. During a long course of ages, she was constantly in motion, in a state of progress, sometimes provoked by the attacks of outward opposition, sometimes excited by the necessity of reform, and moral development in her own constitution. Considering every thing, the Church is a society, which has been continually changing, and continually advancing; whose history is varied, and progressive. Without doubt, the equal admission, of all classes to ecclesiastical employments, the continual recruiting of the Church, on a principle of equality, powerfully conduced to sustain, and incessantly renew in her both motion and life; and to prevent the triumph of immutability.

How was it possible for the Church, which admitted all men to power, to ascertain their right to it? How did she discover in the bosom of society; how did she separate from it the legitimate superiorities (*supériorités légitimes*) who ought to take part in her government?

Two principles prevailed in the Church. First : The election of the inferior by the superior,—choice, or nomination. Secondly : The election of the superior by the subordinates, or what is properly called election, such as we now conceive it to be.

The ordination of priests, for example, the faculty of constituting any man a priest, was the privilege of the superior,—the superior selected the inferior. Likewise, in the collation to certain ecclesiastical benefices, amongst others, to benefices attached to feudal grants ; the superior, the king, the pope, or the lord, nominated the beneficiary. In other cases, the principle of true election prevailed. The bishops were for a long period, and at the epoch we are considering, they were still frequently elected by the clergy ; the faithful, or general body of Christians, occasionally had a voice in their election. In the monasteries, the abbot was elected by the monks ; at Rome, the popes were elected by the college of cardinals, and in the earlier ages, all the Roman clergy assisted. You therefore perceive, that these two principles,—the choice of the inferior by the superior, and the election of the superior by the subordinates,—were recognised and employed by the Church, especially at the period we are studying : it was either by one, or the other of these means, that she nominated

those destined to exercise any part of the ecclesiastical power.

Not only were these two principles coexistent; but, being essentially different, they were continually in opposition. After many ages, after numerous vicissitudes, the nomination of the inferior by the superior, became the practice of the Christian Church. But, in general, from the fifth to the twelfth century, the other principle, that of the choice of the superior, by the subordinates, still prevailed. Let us not be surprised, that two such opposite principles, should have existed together. If we consider society in general, if we observe the natural course of the world, the mode in which power is transmitted, we shall perceive, that this transmission is effected, sometimes in accordance with one of these modes, sometimes with the other. The Church, did not invent them; she found them in the laws of Providence for the regulation of human affairs, and she adopted them from that source. There is truth, and utility in both. Their combination would frequently be the best means of discovering those who should legitimately possess power. It is, in my estimation, most unfortunate, that one of these principles,—the nomination of the inferior by the superior,—should have obtained the ascendancy in the Church: the other, nevertheless, was not completely annihilated, and under various names, and more or less successfully,

became frequently reproduced; with at least sufficient force to protest against, and frequently interrupt the prescription.

The Christian Church, gentlemen, acquired, at the period we are now considering an extraordinary power; by its respect for equality, and legitimate superiorities (*supériorités légitimes*). It was the most popular, the most accessible society; that which was most open to talents, and the noble ambition of human nature. To this cause it owed its power, much more than to wealth, and the illegitimate means, it has too frequently employed.

In regard to the second condition of good government—the respect for liberty—the Church left much to desire.

Two pernicious principles may here be distinguished, one, acknowledged, incorporated, as it were, in the doctrines of the Church, the other, introduced into it, by human weakness, and in nowise a legitimate consequence of its doctrines.

The first, is, the negation of the right of private judgment (*raison individuelle*) — the assumption of a spiritual authority, to direct the religious belief of every member of the Christian society, without permitting any discussion on matters of faith. It is more easy to claim this power than to obtain it. Convictions cannot enter the human mind without the consent of

reason; without being introduced by her. In whatever mode they present themselves, whatever name they invoke, reason investigates their claims, and if they are admitted, it is because she has accepted them. Therefore, under whatever form we attempt to conceal it; private judgment is always exercised on the ideas that are sought to be obtruded on reason.

It is true notwithstanding, that reason may become impaired, and may to a certain extent abdicate her office, and allow her power to be diminished; she may be induced to make an injurious use of her faculties, or not to employ them to the extent she ought to do. Such has actually been the consequence of the pernicious principle admitted by the Church: but this principle, has never been carried out to its purest, and fullest extent;—in fact, that is impossible.

The second pernicious principle is the right of compulsion, which the Church has assumed;—a right contrary to the nature of a religious society, to the origin of the Church, to its primitive maxims; a right disputed by the most illustrious fathers, by St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, St. Martin; but which nevertheless prevailed, and became a dominant principle. The assumption of the power to force belief (if these words can be used together) or to inflict *material* pains, and penalties on opinion; the persecution of heresy,—that is to say, contempt for the legitimate liberty of

the human mind,—this is the error, which, even before the fifth century, had been introduced into the Christian Church, and proved so fatal to it.

If then we consider the Church, with respect to the liberty of its members, we shall perceive that its principles, in this particular, were less legitimate, less salutary, than those which presided at the formation of ecclesiastical power. We must not however suppose, that a pernicious principle radically vitiates an institution, or even that it is the cause of all the evil it has been the means of introducing into its bosom. Nothing occasions more error in history, than the universal application of logic. When the human mind has become impressed with any idea, it endeavours to draw from it every possible consequence, considers every effect it is capable of producing, and then transfers all these associations to history. But facts are not so accompanied; the consequences of events are not so rapid as the deductions of the mind. Good and evil are so intimately, so invariably intermingled, that on whatever side you penetrate; if even you descend to the fundamental elements of society, or of the mind; you will find these two principles coexisting, and becoming simultaneously developed,—continually opposing, though without ever being able to exterminate each other. Human nature never reaches the extreme limits either of good or

evil. It vibrates between them, recovering itself when it appears ready to fall, and stumbling when it would seem to be most erect. We perceive here, the same discordance, variety, and conflict, which I before remarked, are the distinguishing features of European civilization. There is another general fact, which characterizes the government of the Church, to which we ought to direct our attention. In these days gentlemen, when we consider the nature of any government, whatever it may be, we know that it will seldom arrogate any other power, than that of governing the outward actions of mankind, the civil relations between individuals: every government professes that this is its sole concern. The mind, the conscience, morality properly so called; private opinions, and private life; are not interfered with; perfect freedom is permitted to them.

But, gentlemen, the Christian Church, attempted and effected exactly the contrary—she aspired to govern the mind, human liberty, domestic manners, and private opinions. She did not, like a civil government, promulgate a code, and comprehend in it only those actions morally culpable, and socially dangerous; in order that those possessing this twofold character should be only punished;—but she prepared a catalogue of actions morally culpable; punished them all under the name of sins, and aimed at their total

suppression : in a word, the government of the Church, was not addressed like modern governments, to the material nature of man, to the purely civil relations between individuals ; but to the moral nature, to thought, to the conscience, in fact, to all that is most secret, most free, and most impatient of restraint. The Church, therefore, from the very nature of her undertaking, combined with the character of some of the principles on which her government was founded ; was continually in danger of having recourse to tyranny, to an illegitimate employment of force. But, at the same time, this force encountered an obstacle, which could not be surmounted. Human thought and liberty, although restricted, and confined ; will always energetically repel all attempts to enslave them, and will even constrain the despotism by which they are oppressed, continually to resign a portion of its power. This occurred in the Christian Church. We have recognised amongst the governing principles of the Church the proscription of heresy, the negation of the right of private judgment, of free inquiry, the assumption of a spiritual power to compel belief in the doctrines she inculcated. But can we find any society where the right of private judgment has been more boldly developed than in the Christian Church ? What are the various sects, and heresies, but the fruit of individual opinions ?—Dissent, and heresy ; all the

oppositions which arose in the Christian Church, are an incontestable proof of the life, the moral activity that reigned within her. It was a stormy and painful existence, replete with peril, error, and crime ;—yet noble, and powerful, and which gave rise to the grandest development of intellect and determination. Turn from the opposition, to consider the ecclesiastical government :—you will find that it was constituted, and acted in a mode completely at variance with the tendency of some of its principles. It denied the right of inquiry, it sought to destroy the right of private judgment ; and yet it incessantly appealed to reason, and its ruling principle was liberty. What were the institutions of the Church, what were her modes of action ? Provincial, national, and general councils ; a continual correspondence, a perpetual publication of letters, admonitions, and writings. No government, ever carried discussion, and open deliberation so far. We might imagine ourselves amidst the schools of Greek philosophy. Pure discussion, the pure investigation of truth did not however occupy attention ; but authority, necessary measures, the promulgation of decrees—in fact, the business of a government. But such was the influence of intellectual life in this government, that it became the general and ruling principle ; that to which all others yielded—the supremacy

of reason, and liberty, was incontestably evinced in it.

I am very far from concluding that the pernicious principles I have endeavoured to characterize, and which in my opinion at that time existed in the system of the Church, remained ineffective. Even at the period we are considering they had already produced injurious effects; effects still more fatal became apparent some time later; but they did not inflict all the injury their nature rendered them capable of; they were unable to eradicate the good which was coexistent with them.

Such is the Church gentlemen, considered in herself, in her interior, in her own nature. I now turn to her relations with sovereigns, with the holders of temporal power:—this is the second point of view in which I proposed to consider her.

When the Empire had fallen, when instead of the ancient Roman system, of that government under which the Church derived her existence, under which she had acquired strength, with which she had ancient ties, and whose manners were familiar to her; she was placed amidst the barbarian kings, the barbarian chiefs, with whom, whether dispersed over the country or established in their castles, she had nothing in common; who were not united to her either by

tradition, belief, or sentiment—her danger was great, and she felt it was so.

A single idea at that time possessed the Church ;—it was, to acquire dominion over these intruders ; to convert them. The Church, in her relations with the Barbarians, had, at first, scarcely any other object.

In order to influence the Barbarians, it was especially necessary to dazzle their senses, and appeal to their imagination. On that account, the number, the pomp, and variety of the ceremonials of worship were greatly augmented. It is proved by the ancient chronicles, that it was chiefly by this means the Church influenced the Barbarians,—their conversion was accomplished through the agency of magnificent spectacles.

When, however, they were converted, when some ties were formed between them and the Church, her perils were not over. The brutality, the inconsideration of barbarian manners, were so great ; that the new belief, the new sentiments with which they had been inspired ; exercised very little influence over them. Violence, became once more the ruling principle, and made the Church its victim, as well as society in general. In order to defend herself, the Church proclaimed a principle, already, though more indistinctly, professed under the empire :—the separation of the spiritual, and temporal powers ; and their reciprocal independence. It was by the aid of this

principle, that the Church maintained her independent existence amidst the Barbarians:—she asserted that force had no authority, over the system of religious belief, over its hopes, or promises; that the spiritual, and the temporal worlds were completely distinct.

You immediately perceive what salutary consequences have resulted from this principle. Independent of the temporary service it did the Church; it had the inestimable effect, of establishing the separation of these two powers, and causing them mutually to control each other. Moreover, in maintaining the independence of the intellectual world collectively, the Church prepared the way for the independence of individual reason—for freedom of thought. The Church affirmed that the system of religious belief, ought never to be subjected to force:—and each individual in time applied the language of the Church to himself. The principle of free inquiry; of the freedom of the human mind, is precisely the same, as the principle of the independence of the general spiritual authority, with regard to temporal power.

Unfortunately it is not difficult to pass from the desire for liberty, to the ambition of ruling. This occurred in the Church;—the natural development of ambition, and human pride, excited the Church to attempt to establish not only her own independence, but the ascendancy of the

spiritual over the temporal power. We should err, however, in supposing that this assumption had its origin solely in the weakness of humanity—it was derived from other, and deeper sources, which ought to be carefully studied.

When the intellectual world is free; when thought, and the conscience, are not subjected to a power which opposes their right of deliberating and deciding, and which employs force to control them; when there is no visible and constituted spiritual government, assuming and exercising the right of dictating to opinions;—the idea of the superiority of the spiritual over the temporal order can scarcely arise. Such is very nearly the state of the world at this day. But when a government of the spiritual order exists, as it existed in the tenth century; when the mind, and the conscience, are subjected to certain laws, to certain institutions; to the powers which arrogate the right to govern, and constrain them; in a word, when the spiritual power is established, when, in the names of right and of force, it has effectually taken possession of reason, and human conscience; it is natural, that it should claim dominion over the temporal order, that it should exclaim—“ Shall I govern all that is most exalted, most independent in man; shall I rule over his mind, his will, his conscience; and shall I not have any power over his external

interests,—over those which are merely transient and material?—Am I the interpreter of justice and truth, and shall I not be permitted to govern earthly relations in accordance with what justice and truth require?" This reasoning, would naturally urge the spiritual order to attempt to encroach on the temporal. The tendency to this was increased by the fact, that, at the period of which we speak, the spiritual order comprehended every form of intellectual development. There was only one science, theology, only one spiritual order, the theological: all the other sciences, rhetoric, arithmetic, even music; all were included in theology.

The spiritual power being then at the head of all intellectual activity, would naturally arrogate to itself the general government of the world.

A second cause conduced to the same effect;—the frightful state of the temporal order, the violence and iniquity which prevailed in all temporal governments.

For some ages, the rights of temporal power, have been lightly spoken of; but at the epoch we are considering, temporal power was pure force, an unrepressed system of plunder. However imperfect the notions of the Church respecting morality and justice might then be; she was infinitely superior to a temporal government of such a character; and was perpetually invited

by the people to take its place. When a pope, or a bishop, proclaimed that a sovereign had forfeited his rights, that his subjects were released from their oath of allegiance, this intervention, though without doubt subject to great abuses, was frequently, in the particular case to which it was directed, legitimate, and salutary. It has frequently occurred, that when the people have been deprived of freedom, religion has supplied its place. In the tenth century when the people were not capable of defending themselves, against civil violence, or of asserting their rights; religion intervened in the name of heaven. This is one of the causes which chiefly contributed to render the theocratic power triumphant.

A third cause existed; which in my opinion has been too little noticed:—the complicated position of the heads of the Church, the variety of aspects under which they were presented to society. On one hand, they were prelates, members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and therefore independent:—on the other, they were vassals, and as such, subject to the obligations of temporal feudality. This was not all, they were subjects, as well as vassals. A semblance of the ancient connexion between the Roman Emperors, and the bishops and clergy; existed between the clergy, and the barbarian sovereigns. Through a series of causes which it would occupy too much time

to develop and explain, the bishops had been induced to regard the barbarian sovereigns, to a certain extent, as the successors of the Roman Emperors, and to attribute the former imperial rights to them. The heads of the clergy had therefore, a triple character. An ecclesiastical character, and as such independent; a feudal character which imposed on them certain duties, compelled them to perform certain services; and lastly the character of simple subjects, and as such bound to obey an absolute sovereign. What followed? The temporal sovereigns, who were neither less ambitious or less grasping than the bishops, often availed themselves of their rights as lords or sovereigns, to attack the independence of the spiritual power, to usurp the right of collating to benefices, of nominating to bishoprics &c:—on their side, the bishops frequently intrenched themselves within their spiritual independence, and refused the obligations they owed as vassals or subjects;—so that, an almost inevitable bias, impelled on one hand, the sovereigns to destroy the independence of the spiritual power; and on the other, the heads of the Church, to render their spiritual independence, the means of universal dominion.

The results of this are apparent in the facts that are universally known; in the dispute respecting investitures, in the contest between the

Church and the Empire. The true source of the uncertainty, and the conflict of these pretensions, was the complicated position of the heads of the Church, and the difficulty of reconciling their different characters.

Finally, the Church had a third relation with temporal sovereignty, the least favourable, the most fatal to her interest. She laid claim to the right of coercion, the right to repress and punish heresy, but she had no means of carrying it into effect. She had not the disposal of any material force; when she had condemned the heretic, she was unable to execute the judgment she had pronounced. What then did she do? She appealed to what has been termed the secular arm; she employed the force of the civil power as the means of coercion; she thus placed herself with respect to the civil power, in a situation of dependence, and infirmity. To this deplorable necessity she was reduced, by the adoption of the pernicious principles of coercion and persecution.

I pause here, gentlemen;—it is too late to prosecute our inquiries concerning the Church. I have yet to explain to you what were her relations with the people; what principles guided those relations; what were their effects on general civilization. I shall then endeavour to confirm by reference to history, and to facts; by a considera-

tion of the vicissitudes of the destiny of the Church from the fifth to the twelfth century, the conclusions we have drawn from the nature of her principles, and the character of her institutions.

LECTURE VI.

GENTLEMEN,

We were unable in our last réunion, to conclude our inquiries respecting the state of the Church, from the fifth to the twelfth century. I then stated that she ought to be considered under three principal aspects,—first, in herself, in her internal constitution, in her peculiar nature, as a distinct, and independent society;—secondly, in her relations with sovereigns, with the temporal power;—thirdly, in her relations with the people. We have only accomplished the two first portions of our task,—it remains for us to consider the Church, in her relation with the people. We will then after this threefold examination endeavour to form a general estimate of the influence of the Church on European civilization, from the fifth to the twelfth century; and will finally,

verify our assertions by facts,—by the history of the Church during that period.

You will readily comprehend; that in speaking of the relations of the Church with the people, I am obliged to confine myself to general views. I cannot detail the practices of the Church, or describe the constant intercourse of the clergy with the people. The prevailing principles, the grand effects of the system and conduct of the Church, towards the body of Christians; are all I shall endeavour to place under your observation.

The distinguishing feature, and it must be allowed, the radical vice in the relations of the Church with the people, was the separation of the governors from the governed; the want of any influence of the governed over their government; the separation of the Christian clergy from the people.

It is evident that this evil must have been created by the existing conditions of mankind, and of society; for it was introduced at a very early period, into the Christian Church. The separation of the clergy from the Christian people, had not been entirely consummated, at the epoch we were considering; the people, had still, on certain occasions,—sometimes for example in the election of bishops—a direct interference in the ecclesiastical government. But

this interference became continually less frequent, less powerful,—and even in the second century of our era, it had rapidly and visibly begun to decline. Even from its cradle, a tendency to isolation, and the independence of the clergy, forms, to a great extent, the history of the Church.

We cannot deny that from this cause sprang the greatest proportion of those abuses, which even at that epoch, and afterwards to a much greater extent were so fatal to the Church. We must not however consider these abuses as peculiar to the Church, or regard this tendency to isolation as peculiar to the Christian clergy, There is, in the very nature of a religious society, a powerful tendency, to elevate the governors greatly above the governed, to attribute to them a distinctive and sacred character. This effect is produced by the nature of the mission, with which they are invested, of the character under which they are presented to the eyes of the people. This effect is nevertheless more pernicious in a religious, than in any other society. What is in question as concerns the governed? Their reason, their conscience, their future destiny: in fact, every thing that is most secret, most personal, and most free. We can in some measure conceive, that a man may abandon the direction of his material interests, his temporal

affairs to an outward authority, although most injurious consequences may thereby be produced. We can understand the philosopher, who when he was informed that his house was on fire, replied—"Go and tell my wife, I do not meddle with household affairs." But when conscience, mind, and intellectual existence are concerned ;—to abdicate self-government, to abandon oneself to an extrinsic power, is a moral suicide, a servitude infinitely more galling than personal slavery, than the condition of the serf.

Such, however, was the pernicious principle which without ever completely prevailing, as I shall presently show, continually obtained an increased ascendancy over the relations between the Christian Church and the people. You have already seen, gentlemen, that there was no guarantee for liberty—even for the clergy,—in the bosom of the Church. It was much worse for those beyond its pale, for the laity. Ecclesiastics at least, possessed the right of discussion and deliberation, their individual faculties were developed :—conflict partially supplied the place of liberty. Nothing similar to this, existed between the clergy, and the people. The laity were mere spectators of the government of the Church. We have seen that very early, the idea arose and prevailed ; that theology ; the questions, and affairs of religion,

were the peculiar and privileged domain of the clergy ; that the clergy, possessed not only the right to decide, but even to occupy themselves concerning those questions, and that the laity ought in no manner whatsoever to interfere. At the period we are considering, this theory was already fully established :—the lapse of centuries, and terrible revolutions have been required to overcome it, and in some measure to restore to the people the right of discussing the questions, and doctrines of religion. The legal separation of the clergy, and the people, had thus been nearly accomplished, in principle, as well as in fact, before the twelfth century.

You must not however imagine, gentlemen, that the Christian people were even at that epoch, destitute of all influence over their government. Legal interference was wanting, but not influence. It is almost impossible entirely to deprive the people of influence in any government, more especially, in a government founded on a system of belief, common both to the governors, and the governed. Wherever this community of ideas is developed, wherever the same intellectual movement impels both the government, and the people ; a necessary tie is established between them, which no vicious organization can entirely dissolve. In order more clearly to explain my meaning, I will take an example nearer our own time, in the political world. At no period in the history of

France had the French nation, less legal action, by means of institutions, on their government, than in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under Louis XIV., and Louis XV. No one is ignorant, that almost all the direct and official means by which the nation could exercise authority, were nearly annihilated. But nevertheless, there cannot be a doubt, that the public, the country at that epoch, exercised a much greater influence over the government, than at any other,—at the period for instance when the states general were frequently convened; when the parliaments interfered much in political affairs; when the legal participation of the people in the government was much greater.

The cause of this is, that a power exists not confined by laws, which when requisite can subsist without the aid of institutions;—the force of ideas, of public intelligence, of opinion. Public opinion was much more powerful in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, than it was at any other period. Though destitute of legal means to influence the government, it acted indirectly by the power of ideas common to the governors, and the governed; it being found absolutely necessary that the governors should regard the opinion of the governed. A similar fact occurred in the Christian Church, from the fifth to the twelfth century. The Christian people it is true, had no legal influence; but the

popular mind was much agitated by religious questions: this movement propelled both the laity and the clergy in one direction; and thus the people acted on the clergy.

It is especially necessary, in studying history, to appreciate the effect of indirect influences:—they are much more efficacious, and much more salutary, than they are generally believed to be. It is natural that men should wish their influence to be prompt and apparent; that they should aspire to the pleasure of witnessing their success, their power, and their triumphs. This is not always possible—nor always useful. There are many occasions, many situations in which indirect and undistinguishable influence alone is beneficial and practicable. I shall again seek for an illustration in the political world: more than once, and especially in 1641, the English parliament demanded—as many other assemblies have done in similar crises—the right of nominating the great officers of the crown, the ministers, the privy councillors, &c.; and regarded this direct influence on the government, as an immense, and precious guarantee. It has occasionally exercised this power, but always with ill success. Unfit persons have been elected, and affairs have been ill governed. Nevertheless, what is now the case in England? Does not the influence of parliament determine the formation of the ministry, and the nomination of all the great officers of the

crown? Certainly. But it is by an indirect and general influence, not a special intervention. The result that England so long desired has been accomplished, but by another means;—the first, was never productive of good.

One cause of this, gentlemen, demands our consideration for a moment. A direct action, supposes very great intelligence, information, and prudence, in those who are intrusted with it:—the object they seek, is to be gained immediately, and by a rapid movement. They ought therefore to be certain they will not miss it. Indirect influences, on the contrary, are only exercised amidst obstacles; after many trials have rectified and purified them. Before they can succeed they are submitted to discussion, they are combated and controlled; their triumph is slow, conditional and partial. For this reason, whenever the popular mind is not sufficiently advanced, sufficiently ripe to be safely intrusted with a direct influence; an indirect influence,—although frequently inefficient,—is nevertheless to be preferred. In this manner, the Christian world influenced its government:—its influence was very incomplete, and I am aware, much too inadequate,—but yet it was felt.

There was also another cause which served as a tie between the Church and the Laity, this was the dispersion, as it may be called, of the Christian clergy, amidst all the conditions of social life. In

almost all other Churches which have been constituted independent of the people they govern : the body of priests has been composed of men, in nearly the same situation in life. Great inequalities were doubtless introduced amongst them ; but taking every thing into consideration, the power, belonged to Colleges of Priests living in common, and governing from the recesses of their temples, the people subjected to their laws. The Christian Church was very differently organized. In the miserable habitations of the *coloni*, and serfs, at the base of the feudal castle, as well as in the palace of the king ; a priest, a member of the clerical order, might always be found. The clergy, were to be met with, in every class of society. This diversity in the situation of Christian priests, their association to every variety of fortune, was a powerful principle of union between the clergy and the laity :—a principle which was wanting in most other ecclesiastical establishments invested with power. The bishops, the heads of the Christian clergy, were moreover as you have seen, implicated in the feudal organization :—they were members of the civil, as well as of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These causes, produced a community of interest, habits, and manners, between the civil and religious orders. The conduct of military bishops, of priests who led a secular life, has been much condemned. This was certainly a great abuse ; but it was

much less injurious, than the existence of those priests, who never quitted their temples, and who were totally separated from ordinary life. It was better that the bishops, should to a certain point, be associated with civil disorders; than that the priests should be completely estranged from the population, and ignorant of their affairs, and their manners. A similarity of destiny, and of situation, in these respects, existed between the clergy, and the Christian people; which though it did not correct, at least diminished the evil which arose from the separation of the governors and the governed.

Having now, gentlemen, admitted this separation, and determined its limits, as we have just done, let us endeavour to trace the plan of Church government,—let us see in what manner it acted on the people subjected to its authority. What did it effect, on one hand, for the development of man, for the intellectual progress of the individual;—on the other, for the amelioration of the social state?

In regard to the development of the individual, I do not think that at the period we are considering, the Church bestowed much care on it: she endeavoured to inspire temporal authorities with milder sentiments, to obtain a greater measure of justice for the weak; she endeavoured to animate the moral life of the subject population; to excite in their minds, ideas and hopes, of

a more elevated nature, than their ordinary destiny permitted: I do not however think that the Church at that period, did much to advance true individual development, to ameliorate the personal nature of man;—at least so far as the laity were concerned. All she effected was for the advantage of the ecclesiastical society. She anxiously desired the improvement of the clergy, the instruction of the priests: schools were founded for them, and every other institution that the deplorable nature of society permitted. But all these were clerical schools; solely designed for the instruction of the clergy;—in other respects the Church exercised only a slow and indirect influence, over the progress of ideas, and manners. There is no doubt, that a stimulus was given to the general activity of the popular mind, by the career she opened, to all those she deemed capable of serving her; but this was nearly all she effected for the intellectual improvement of the laity.

The Church made greater, and much more successful efforts, to ameliorate the social condition. She obstinately combated all the great vices of society at that epoch; slavery for example. It has been repeatedly asserted, that the abolition of slavery in the modern world, was entirely the work of Christianity. This I think is going too far. Slavery subsisted for a long period in the Christian world, without occasioning much as-

tonishment or indignation. A multitude of other causes, a great development of new ideas, of new principles of civilization were required; in order to abolish this chief of all evils, this iniquity of iniquities. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied, that the Church employed her influence to repress it. One incontestable proof of this exists. The greater number of the formulæ of manumission at various epochs were founded on a religious motive:—freedom was generally bestowed on account of religious ideas, of the future hopes, and religious equality of mankind.

The Church also laboured to suppress a number of barbarous practices, and to ameliorate the civil and criminal legislation. You are aware that notwithstanding the existence of some principles of liberty; legislation at that period, was both absurd, and mischievous. You know that ridiculous ordeals, the judicial combat, the oath of compurgation, were considered the sole means of discovering truth. The Church endeavoured to substitute more rational, and more legitimate means. I have already spoken of the difference that may be observed between the laws of the Visigoths—which in great measure emanated from the council of Toledo—and the other barbarian codes. It is impossible to compare them, without being struck by the immense superiority of the ideas of the Church, in all matters of

legislation, and jurisprudence,—in all that concerns the investigation of truth, and the destiny of mankind. The greater number of these ideas, were doubtless borrowed from Roman legislation; but if they had not been preserved, and defended, by the Church, if she had not laboured to propagate them, they would have perished. Is the subject under discussion, the employment of the oath, in a legal process? Consult the Laws of the Visigoths, you will see with what discretion the use of it is limited.

“ The judge, in order to make himself acquainted with the cause, must first interrogate the witnesses, and then examine the writings, to the end that the truth may be more surely discovered, and that an oath may not be inconsiderately taken. Truth, and justice, demand, that the writings on each side, should be thoroughly examined, and that the necessity of an oath, being suspended over the heads of the parties, should come upon them unawares. That the oath should be administered, solely in those causes, in which the judge shall have been unable to discover any writing, any proof, or certain indication, of the truth.”—*For. Jud.* L. II. tit. i. 121.

In criminal jurisprudence, punishment is proportioned to crime, in accordance with tolerably correct ideas of philosophy and morality. We recognise the efforts of an enlightened legislator, contending against the violence, and incon-

sideration, of barbarian manners. Even the title, —*Cæde et morte hominum*,—compared with the corresponding laws of other cotemporary nations, is a very remarkable instance of this. Elsewhere, injury alone appears to constitute crime; and its punishment is sought for in the pecuniary reparation, which is made in compounding for it. *Here* crime is retraced to its true, and moral element—intention. The different shades of criminality,—involuntary homicide, inadvertent homicide, justifiable homicide, murder, with or without premeditation, are distinguished, and defined, nearly as accurately as they are in our modern codes, and the punishments are proportioned almost as equitably. Legislative justice went further. It endeavoured to diminish—although unable to abolish—the difference in the legal value of individuals, sanctioned by the laws of other barbarians. The only distinction, that it maintained, was that, between the free man, and the slave. As respects free men, the punishment does not vary according to the race, nor according to the rank, of the deceased; but solely, according to the different degrees of the murderer's moral culpability. In regard to slaves,—not daring completely to deprive masters of the right of life, and death, this right was placed under some control, by subjecting it to a public, and regular process. The text of this law, is worthy of being cited.

“ If no culprit, or accomplice in a crime, ought to remain unpunished—how much greater reason is there, to chastise him, who has wilfully, and unnecessarily, committed a homicide ! Thus, as masters, moved by their pride, sometimes put their slaves to death, without these latter having committed any fault, it is proper entirely to annul this licence. It is therefore ordained, that the present law, shall be eternally binding on all. No master, or mistress, shall be permitted to put to death, without a public judgment, any of their male or female slaves, or any other person dependant upon them. If a slave, or other servant, shall commit a crime, which subjects him to capital punishment, his master, or his accuser, shall immediately inform the judge, the count, or the duke, of the place where the action was committed. After the affair has been tried, if the crime shall have been proved, the culprit, shall suffer the sentence of death, that he has merited, either from his master, or the judge : however, in case the judge should not desire to put the accused to death, he may draw up in writing, a sentence of capital punishment, and it will then remain with the master, either to put him to death, or to grant him his life. Nevertheless, if a slave,—committing an act of disobedience,—shall be unhappily excited to strike, or attempt to strike his master, with a stone, with any weapon, or in any other manner ; and if the master, in defending himself, shall kill the slave in his anger ; he shall not be accounted guilty of homicide. But it must be proved, that the fact occurred, as is here described ; and that, by the testimony, or the oath, of the

male or female slaves who were present, and by the oath of the accused himself. Whoever, from pure malice, either by his own hand, or by the hand of another, shall kill his slave without a public judgment; shall be considered infamous, shall be declared incapable of appearing as a witness, and shall be obliged to pass the rest of his days in exile, and penance: his property shall pass to his nearest relations, or to whomsoever the law shall declare his heir."—*For. Jud. L. VI. tit. v. l. 12.*

There is another circumstance, gentlemen, in the institutions of the Church, which in general has been too little noticed—it is, her penitentiary system—a system so much the more curious, because it is, as respects the principles, and applications, of the penal law, almost completely in accordance with the ideas of modern philosophy. If you study the nature of ecclesiastical punishments,—of the public penances which the Church employed as a principal mode of chastisement, you will see that their chief design was to excite repentance in the mind of the culprit, and terror in that of the spectators—the moral terror of example. Another idea,—the idea of expiation, was united to it. I do not know if as a general thesis; it is possible to separate the idea of expiation, from that of punishment; and if there is not in all punishment,—independent of the necessity to excite the repentance of the culprit, and to deter all those who might be tempted

to perpetrate the crime,—a secret and imperious desire, to expiate the wrong that has been committed. But putting aside this question, it is evident that repentance and example, are the objects the Church had in view, in her penitentiary system;—and is not the attainment of these objects, the aim of a truly philosophical legislation? Are not these, the principles on which the most enlightened *civilians*, of the last century, and of our own days, have demanded the reformation of the European Penal Laws? Consult their works, those of Bentham for instance,—you will be astonished, by the resemblance you will discover, between the penal measures they propose, and those that the Church employed. They certainly did not derive their principles from the Church, and she little imagined that her example, would be one day cited in support of the plans, of the most sceptical philosophers.

Finally, the Church, endeavoured in every possible manner, to repress the constant recourse that was had to violence, and the continual wars, that prevailed during that period. Every one knows that by what was called the Truce of God, and by various measures of the same nature; the Church, attempted to prevent the employment of force, and to introduce a greater degree of order, and mildness, into the social system. The facts are so well known, that I may

be here dispensed from entering into any detail respecting them.

Such, gentlemen, are the principal points, to which I wish to direct your attention, in examining the relations of the Church with the people. We have considered her, under the three aspects I pointed out to you,—we have now studied her, both *within* and *without*, in her internal constitution, and her twofold situation. It only remains for us to ascertain from the knowledge we possess by means of induction and conjecture; what was her general influence on European civilization. This work, if I am not mistaken, is nearly accomplished; or at least much advanced. The simple announcement of facts, of the dominant principles of the Church, reveal, and explain, her influence;—results and causes have, as it were, been exhibited simultaneously. Nevertheless, if we endeavour to sum them up, we shall, I think, be led to adopt two general conclusions.

The first is, that the Church has necessarily exercised, a very great influence, over moral, and intellectual existence, in modern Europe, over the ideas, the sentiments, and the general manners of society. This fact is evident,—the moral, and intellectual development of Europe, has been essentially theological. Consider the history of the fifth and sixth centuries; theology, possessed and directed the human mind; every opinion is

impressed with a theological character; philosophical, political, and historical questions, are all considered under a theological point of view. The Church so completely ruled the human mind, that even the mathematical, and physical sciences, were obliged to submit to its doctrines. The theological spirit, was as it were, the blood that flowed in the veins of the European world, until the time of Bacon, and Descartes. Bacon, in England, and Descartes in France, were the first, who emancipated intellect, from the trammels of theology.

The same character pervades every branch of literature: the habits, the sentiments, and the language of theology, are unceasingly apparent.

Taking every thing into consideration, this influence was salutary:—it not only sustained and accelerated the intellectual movement in Europe; but the system of doctrines, and precepts by the authority of which, it impressed its character on the movement; was very superior, to any thing the ancient world had ever known. It was at once agitated, and progressive.

The influence of the Church, moreover, communicated to the human mind, in the modern world; a variety, an enlargement, that it had never previously experienced. In the East, the human intellect assumed an exclusively religious character; in Grecian society, it was almost entirely worldly;—in the former, humanity—pro-

perly so called—the nature, and the actual destiny of man, were disregarded; in the latter; mankind, their passions, sentiments, and worldly interests, were the sole objects of attention. In the modern world, a religious spirit, mingled with every thing, but excluded nothing. Modern intellect, is at once impressed with a divine, and a human character. The sentiments, the interests of humanity, occupy a large space in our literature; but nevertheless, the religious character of man, that portion of his existence which connects him with another world, continually appears:—so that, the two great sources of human development; humanity, and religion, have simultaneously produced abundant results: and notwithstanding all the evils, all the abuses, which have been intermingled with it; notwithstanding repeated acts of tyranny; the influence of the Church, under an intellectual point of view, has been more conducive to development than to constraint; has caused more extension, than confinement.

Under a political point of view, the case is very different. There is not any doubt, that by softening the sentiments and manners of the people; by disparaging, and prohibiting a great number of barbarous practices,—the Church, has powerfully contributed to the amelioration of the social condition: but in all affairs of social policy; in all that affects the relations between

the government and the subjects; between power and liberty,—I do not think that considering every thing, her influence was beneficial. In this respect, the Church has always appeared, as the interpreter, the defender of two systems, theocracy, and the Roman Empire:—in fact, of despotism; sometimes under a religious, sometimes under a civil form. Consider all her institutions: consider her legislation, her canons, her mode of procedure, you will invariably find the principles of theocracy, or of the Empire, predominant. The Church, while conscious of her weakness, sheltered herself, under the absolute power of the emperors; but when she became strong, she claimed authority as her right, as a consequence of her spiritual power. We must not however form our opinions from a limited number of facts, or from peculiar cases.

The Church, frequently advocated the rights of the people, against the evil government of sovereigns, and frequently approved of, and provoked insurrection. She often pleaded the rights, and interests of the people, before their rulers. But, when it became a question, to interpose a system of political guarantees between power, and liberty; when it was sought to establish a system of permanent institutions, which should effectually protect freedom, from the usurpations of power—the Church, in general ranged herself on the side of despotism.

We should not feel much surprised at this, neither should we attribute it exclusively to the human weakness of the clergy, or to some peculiar vice in the organization of the Christian Church. Another cause more powerful, and more profound exists.

What is the object of religion, whatever may be that religion? It is to govern human passions, the human will. Every religion imposes some check, some power, some government. It seeks in the name of the divine law, to subdue human nature. It opposes itself especially to human liberty; which resists it, and which it therefore desires to overcome. This is the object of religion, its mission, its life.

It must be confessed, that although it is against human liberty that religions contend; although they aspire to reform the human will; they have no moral means of acting on man, but through his own nature, his freedom, and his will. When they act by extrinsic means, by force, by seduction, by any means, in a word, that man does not freely consent to; when they use the mind, as they would employ a purely material force—wind or water for instance:—they do not attain the object they have in view; they do not control and govern the will. It is necessary, if religion is to accomplish its end; that it should become accepted by liberty,—that man should submit himself voluntarily and freely

to it; that he should be free, notwithstanding his submission. This is the twofold problem which religion is required to solve.

But all religions have too frequently forgotten this; they have considered liberty, as an obstacle, not as a means; they have mistaken the nature of the force with which they have to deal; and have endeavoured to govern the human mind, as they would direct a material engine. It is in consequence of this error, that they have almost invariably been led to range themselves on the side of power, and despotism; against human liberty; considering liberty as adverse to them; and being much more solicitous to subdue, than to provide guarantees for it. If all religions, had well considered their modes of action; if they had not suffered themselves to be carried away, by a natural, but deceptive bias; they would have seen, that in order to direct liberty by moral means, it is necessary to provide guarantees for it; that religion cannot, and ought not to act, excepting by moral means;—and they would have respected the human will, even while they attempted to govern it.—This has been too much forgotten,—and religious power has in the end suffered as greatly as liberty. (*Applause.*)

I shall not, gentlemen, prosecute any further, this examination of the general consequences, of

the influence of the Church, on European civilization. They are summed up, in this twofold result ;—a great, and salutary influence, on the moral, and intellectual state ; an influence more pernicious than useful, on the political condition.

We must now verify our assertions by facts ; we must prove from history, the truth of the conclusions we have drawn from the nature, and situation of ecclesiastical society. Let us consider, what was the destiny of the Christian Church, from the fifth to the twelfth century ; and if in effect, the principles I have placed under your observation, and the consequences I have endeavoured to deduce from them, are developed in the manner I have represented.

Do not imagine however, that all these principles, these consequences, appeared simultaneously, and were as clearly defined as I have presented them to you. It is a common, though a very great error, in considering past events through the retrospect of many ages, to overlook the moral chronology ; to forget—a singular forgetfulness—that history is essentially successive. Consider the history of an individual,—Cromwell, Gustavus Adolphus, or Cardinal Richelieu. He enters on his career ; he moves onward ; he rises ; he influences great events, and is influenced by them ;—his destiny is accomplished. We then form an estimate of his

character in its full development, after the hand of Providence has modified and moulded it. But, at the commencement of his career, he was very different, to what he afterwards became; his character appears imperfect, unfinished, if considered, at any single moment; it became gradually evolved. The moral, as well as the physical existence of man, is continually in a state of progression; his being undergoes an incessant change, a continual modification. Cromwell in 1650, was no longer the same he had been ten years before. An individual character, remains; it is the same man who acts, but how greatly changed are his ideas his sentiments, and his will! How much has he acquired, how much has he lost! Let us consider the character of an individual at whatever moment we may choose, he is never such, as we find him, at the close of his existence.

This error, gentlemen, is one into which the greater number of historians have fallen. They form a perfect idea of an individual, and imagine he continued the same during the whole course of his career. Cromwell appears to them unchanged from the time he first entered into parliament in 1628, till his death, which happened in the palace of Whitehall, thirty years afterwards. Institutions and general influences, are treated, with equal incorrectness. Let us be careful to avoid this error. I have shown

you, as a whole, the principles of the Church, and the consequences that may be deduced from them. But remember, that this picture is not historically true. All these results, have been partial, and successive,—we find them scattered throughout time, and space. Do not expect to discover, in the recital of facts, this unity, this prompt and systematic concatenation. Here, one principle shoots forth ; there, another unfolds itself—all is incomplete, unequal, and dispersed. We must look to modern times, to the close of their career, if we would behold their complete development.

I am now about to place before you, the different states of the Church, from the fifth to the twelfth century. It will be impossible by this means, to prove all the assertions I have advanced ; yet I think we shall see enough to convince us of their truth.

The Church appears, in the fifth century, an Imperial Church—the Church of the Roman Empire. At the fall of the Roman Empire, the Church seemed to have attained the object of her ambition, she believed her triumph was complete. She had at length completely vanquished paganism. The last emperor who had assumed the pagan title of sovereign pontiff, like Augustus, and Tiberius, was the Emperor Gratian, who died, at the close of the fourth century. The Church imagined also, that her

struggles against heresy, especially against Arianism, the principal heresy of those days, was ended. The Emperor Theodosius, promulgated numerous, and severe laws, against the Arians, at the end of the fourth century. The Church, was therefore, in possession of the government, and had overcome her greatest enemies. At this very moment, the Roman Empire fell, and she was precipitated amidst other Pagan nations, other heretics—the Barbarians, the Goths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Franks. Her fall was prodigious! You will readily imagine how great must have been the attachment of the Church to the Empire. Therefore, she passionately adhered to all that remained of it,—to the municipal system, and to absolute power. Hence when she had succeeded in converting the Barbarians, she endeavoured, to re-establish the Empire; she addressed herself to the barbarian kings, she represented to them the advantages of assuming the imperial sovereignty, she suggested they should claim all the rights of Roman Emperors; and enter into the same relations with the Church, which had existed between her, and the Roman Empire. This was what the bishops of the fifth and sixth centuries, laboured to accomplish. This was the general state of the Church.

The attempt was unsuccessful. It was impossible to re-establish Roman society, with the

Barbarians. The Church, herself, like civil society, fell into barbarism. This was her second state. When we compare the writings of the ecclesiastical chroniclers, of the eighth century, with those of preceding centuries, the difference is immense. Every vestige of Roman civilization had disappeared; even the language. We feel ourselves, as it were, plunged into barbarism. On one side, the Barbarians entered into the clerical office, they became priests, and bishops;—on the other, the bishops adopted the barbarian life, and without quitting their bishoprics, became chiefs of banditti; and wandered over the country; pillaging, and skirmishing, like the companions of Clovis. We read of many bishops in the work of Gregory of Tours, who passed their lives thus—amongst others Salone and Sagittarius.

Two important facts were developed, in the Barbarian Church. The first, was the separation of the spiritual and temporal powers. It was at the epoch we are considering, that this principle became developed. Nothing more natural. The Church not having succeeded, in reviving the absolute power of the Roman Empire,—in order that she might partake it,—was compelled to seek safety in her independence. She was continually obliged to defend herself, for she was incessantly menaced. Every bishop, every priest, beheld his barbarian neighbours

constantly interfering in the affairs of the Church, as a pretext to possess themselves of her riches, her domains, and her power; and their only means of defence was to say, "The spiritual order, is completely separated from the temporal; you have no right to interfere with it." This principle, became on every occasion the defensive arm of the Church, against the Barbarians.

A second important fact may be referred to the same epoch:—the development of the monastic order in the West. It was, as you all know, at the commencement of the sixth century, that St. Benedict composed his rule for the Monks of the West—whose numbers, at that period, were still very limited, but subsequently increased prodigiously. The Monks at that time, did not form a part of the ecclesiastical order, they were still regarded as secular persons. Priests, and bishops, were selected from amongst them, but it was only at the end of the fifth century, and the beginning of the sixth, that the Monks in general, were considered to form a portion of the clergy properly so called. At that period, priests, and bishops, became monks, and imagined that by so doing, they made great progress in the religious life. The consequence was, that the monastic order, in Europe, became suddenly and greatly developed. The Monks, had greater power over

the imaginations of the Barbarians, than the secular clergy; their numbers made them imposing, as well as the singularity of their life. The secular clergy, the bishop, and the priest, produced little effect on the minds of the Barbarians, who constantly saw them, and were accustomed to ill-treat, and pillage them. It was a more important affair to attack a monastery, where so many holy men were assembled together in a holy place. The monasteries were, during the barbarous times, an asylum for the Church, as the Church was an asylum for the laity. Pious men took refuge there; as in the East, others had fled to the Thebaid, in order to escape from a worldly life, and the corruptions of Constantinople.

These are the two most important facts, in the history of the Church, during the period of barbarism:—on one hand, the separation of the spiritual and temporal powers:—on the other, the development of the monastic system, in the West.

Towards the close of the barbarous ages; a new attempt to revive the Roman Empire, was made by Charlemagne. The Church, once more, became the strict ally of the temporal sovereign. At this epoch, the Papal power, showed itself extremely docile, and its power became prodigiously augmented. The attempt to revive the Roman Empire, again proved

abortive—the Empire of Charlemagne fell ; but the Church, retained all the advantages she had derived from her alliance with him. The Papacy, became the head of the Christian World.

Anarchy recommenced with the death of Charlemagne. The Church fell again into chaos, together with general society. She emerged from it, to enter within the pale of feudality. This was her third state. The dissolution of the Empire of Charlemagne, was productive of nearly the same effects in the ecclesiastical, as in the secular order: unity disappeared, all became local, partial, and individual. A conflict, unknown until that epoch, then commenced; caused by the peculiarity of the situation of the clergy:—the conflict between their ideas, and interests as possessors of fiefs, and their ideas, and interests as priests. The heads of the Church united both these characters; one counterbalanced the other; the ecclesiastical spirit was no longer so powerful or so universal, as it had formerly been; personal interests were more considered; the love of independence, and the manners of feudal life, relaxed the bonds of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. An attempt was then made, in the bosom of the Church, to remedy the effects of this relaxation. It was endeavoured, by means of a federative system, by general assemblies, and discussions, to organize national churches, in different countries. During

this period, under the feudal system, we meet with the greatest number of councils, convocations, ecclesiastical assemblies, both national and provincial. In France, this attempt at unity, was prosecuted with more ardour than elsewhere. The Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, may be considered as the representation of this idea: he constantly laboured to organize the French Church; he sought, and employed, all the means of correspondence, and union, which he imagined might contribute to reunite the Feudal Church. Hincmar maintained, on one side, that the Church was independent of the temporal power, and on the other, that it was independent of the papacy: it was he who, when he was informed the pope wished to visit France, and threatened the bishops with excommunication, exclaimed: *Si excommunicaturus venerit, excommunicatus abibit.*

But the attempt to organize the Feudal Church, was not more successful, than the attempt to establish the Imperial Church had been. It was not possible to produce unity in that Church; and the period of its dissolution rapidly approached. Every bishop, every prelate, every abbot, confined himself more, and more, to his diocese, or his monastery. Disorders increased from the same cause. At that period simony, and the arbitrary disposition of ecclesiastical benefices, prevailed to an enormous

extent; and the lives of the priests were most irregular.

These disorders, disgusted both the people, and the more respectable portion of the clergy; and consequently the spirit of reform arose in the Church. A desire was felt, to establish some power, which should reunite these scattered elements, and impose laws on them. Claude, Bishop of Turin, Agobard Archbishop of Lyons; made certain attempts of this nature in their several dioceses; but it was not in their power to accomplish such a work. The Church of Rome—the papacy, was the only power existing in the Church, which could attempt it with a prospect of success. Rome succeeded in the attempt, and soon became pre-eminent. The Church during the course of the eleventh century, reached her fourth state; and became a theocratic, and monastic Church. Gregory VII. was the author of this change,—so far at least, as it can be said to be the work of an individual.

We have been accustomed, gentlemen, to consider Gregory VII. as a man, who wished to render every thing immutable; as an enemy to intellectual development, to social progress; as a man whose desire was to retain the world in a stationary or retrograde condition. Nothing is further from the truth. Gregory VII. was a despotical reformer, like Charlemagne, and Peter

the Great. He effected nearly as much for the ecclesiastical order, as Charlemagne, in France; and Peter the Great, in Russia; accomplished for civil existence. His aim, was to reform the Church; and through the Church to reform civil society; to introduce into the world, a greater degree of morality, justice, and order:—he desired to effect all this for his own advantage, by means of the papacy.

At the same time that he endeavoured to subject the civil world to the Church, and the Church to the papacy,—his aim, as I before said, being reformation, and progress, not immutability;—an attempt of the same nature, a similar movement took place, in the recesses of the monasteries. An ardent desire was there felt, for the introduction of order, discipline, and a rigid morality. At this epoch, Robert de Molême, established a severe rule at Cîteaux; Saint Norbert completed the reformation of the canonries; the reform of clergy was effected; and Saint Bernard accomplished his great work. A general ferment was excited in the monasteries; the old monks defended their mode of life, protested against these innovations, exclaimed that their freedom was invaded, that it was necessary to conform to the manners of the times, that it was impossible to restore the discipline of the primitive Church; and branded all the reformers with the names of maniacs, visionaries,

and tyrants. In the history of Normandy, written by Orderic Vital, you will find these complaints incessantly repeated.

Every thing at that time appeared to contribute to the advantage of the Church; to its unity, and its power. But while the papacy endeavoured to seize on the government of the world; while the monasteries became reformed, so far as morals were concerned;—a few men of powerful minds, although unsupported, contended that human reason ought to be consulted; and that it should be allowed the right of investigating opinions. They did not in general attack received opinions, or religious belief; they only maintained that opinions and creeds ought to be proved by reason; that it was not sufficient they were affirmed by authority. John Erigena, Roscelin, and Abeillard, were amongst the first who asserted the right of private judgment;—they gave the first impulse to the movement of intellectual liberty, which accompanied the reforms of Hildebrand, and St. Bernard. If we endeavour to trace the prevailing character of this movement, we discover, that it did not aim at a change of opinions; that it did not revolt against public belief; it simply advocated the right of reason to inquire for itself. The scholars of Abeillard demanded, as he himself informs us in his *Introduction to Theology*; “philosophical argu-

ments, such as were proper to satisfy the mind, mind; entreating him to instruct them not merely to repeat what he taught them, but to comprehend it:—for no one can believe what he has not comprehended, and it is ridiculous to preach those things which neither the teacher, or his scholars can understand. What is the object of the study of philosophy, if it be not to lead us to the knowledge of God, to which every thing else should be subordinate? Why do we permit the faithful to read those writings which treat of mundane affairs, and the books of the Gentiles, if it be not to enable them to comprehend the truths of the Holy Scriptures, and to give them the necessary ability to defend them? * * * It is especially necessary for this end, that all the powers of the mind should be called forth, in order to prevent the subtle arguments of the enemies of Christianity, from too readily corrupting the purity of our faith, on questions so difficult, and so complicated, as those which form the object of the Christian religion.”

The importance of this first attempt of liberty, of this revival of the spirit of inquiry, was very soon felt. Though occupied with her own reformation, the Church soon took the alarm; she instantly declared war against these novel reformers, whose methods terrified her much more than their doctrines. This is the great fact which was manifested, at the close of the

eleventh, and the commencement of the twelfth century: at the moment when the Church appeared in its theocratic, and monastic state. At this period, for the first time, the clergy; and the advocates of free inquiry, or philosophical liberals (*libres penseurs*); became engaged in a serious contest. The disputes between Abeillard, and St. Bernard; the councils of Soissons, and Sens, where Abeillard was condemned; were nothing more than an expression of this fact, which has held so important a place in the history of modern civilization. It is the most remarkable occurrence in the state of the Church in the twelfth century,—the point at which, we shall close our researches to day.

At the same period, gentlemen, a movement of another nature commenced. I mean the enfranchisement of the communes:—a singular proof of the inconsistency of barbarian manners. If those citizens, who so enthusiastically contended for their liberties, had been told that there existed men, who sustained the rights of human reason, who contended for the right of free inquiry, but whom the Church treated as heretics; they would have stoned, or burnt them, on the spot. Abeillard, and his friends, several times incurred this danger. On the other hand, the same writers, who asserted the rights of human reason; spoke of the efforts to enfranchise the communes, as an abominable disorder.

der, as the overturn of society. War appeared to be declared between the philosophical, and the popular movement—between political, and intellectual enfranchisement. Centuries elapsed, before these two great powers became reconciled, and recognised the community of their interests. In the twelfth century they held nothing in common. We shall be convinced of this, when we treat, at our next réunion, of the enfranchisement of the communes.

LECTURE VII.

GENTLEMEN,

We have brought down the history of two of the grand elements of modern civilization,—the Feudal system, and the Church, to the twelfth century. We shall this day consider, the third of these fundamental elements;—I mean the *Communes*: We shall trace their history, as far as the twelfth century, restricting ourselves to the limits we previously defined.

The situation of the Communes, during the period we are considering, was, however, very different from that of the Church, and of the Feudal system. From the fifth to the twelfth centuries, Feudality, and the Church, — although they afterwards acquired new modes of development—appeared under a definite, and nearly perfect form. We have traced their rise; their growth, and their maturity. It was very different with the Communes. They only ob-

tained a place in history in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, at the close of the epoch we are considering. It is true that their history, before that period, is well worthy of being studied; it is true that there were previously many traces of their existence; but it was only in the eleventh century, that they openly appeared, on the great theatre of the world, and became an important element of modern civilization. In the Feudal system, and the Church, from the fifth to the twelfth century, we have been able to trace the rise of causes; the development of effects:—and whenever by means of induction, and conjecture, we have deduced certain results from principles; we have been enabled to verify them by an investigation of facts. But, this facility of proof is wanting, in regard to the Communes;—at the period we are considering, they were still in their infancy; and I can only now occupy you concerning their causes, and their origin. The observations, I shall make, concerning the effects of the existence of the Communes, and their influence on the course of European civilization, must in a great measure be by anticipation. I cannot call in the aid of known, and contemporaneous facts. It was not until a later period, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, that the Communes attained any degree of influence, and development; that the effects of the institution ap-

peared; and that we can verify our assertions, by historical proof. I am anxious, gentlemen, to impress you with this difference; in order that you may pardon, whatever you discover incomplete, and premature, in the picture I am about to present to you.

Let us imagine, that in the year 1789, at the moment when the terrible regeneration of France commenced, a burgher of the twelfth century, suddenly reappeared amongst us:—that he had been induced to read—for we must suppose him to have acquired that art—one of those pamphlets, which so forcibly agitated all minds; for instance, that of M. Sieyes, entitled, “What is the third Estate?” (*Qu’ est-ce que le Tiers ?*) Let him read this phrase, which is the text of the pamphlet,—“The Tiers-état is the entire French nation, excepting the Nobles, and Clergy.” I ask you, gentlemen, what impression do you conceive this phrase would produce on the mind of such a man? Do you think he would comprehend it? No!—for he would not understand the meaning of the words “*French nation*,” they would not recal to his mind any of the facts, with which he was acquainted, any of the facts, known in his day. But if he comprehended the phrase, if he distinctly perceived the nature of that dominion over society, attributed to the *Tiers-état*; he would most assuredly esteem it an absurd, almost an impious proposi-

tion; so greatly would it be at variance with all that he had seen, with the whole of his ideas and sentiments.

Now, gentlemen, let this astonished citizen, be invited to follow you to any of the Communes of France; to Rheims, to Beauvais, to Laon, to Noyon;—he will be much more amazed. He enters the town,—he sees neither towers, or ramparts, or local militia; he cannot discern any means of defence; every thing is open; any one who chooses to assail it, may seize upon the place. The citizen becomes alarmed for the safety of the Commune; he finds it weak and unprotected. He penetrates into the interior; he inquires what occurs there, how the town is governed, what is the condition of the inhabitants. He is informed that beyond the walls a power exists, which at its pleasure levies taxes on them without their consent; and calls out their militia, in the event of a war, without their approbation. He is informed that there are magistrates, a mayor, and sheriffs; but that they are not nominated by the citizens. He learns, that the affairs of the Commune, are not under the control of the burghers; but that a servant of the king, a steward residing at a distance, has the management of them. Moreover, he is told that the inhabitants, are prohibited from meeting together, to deliberate in common, respecting their local affairs; that

the bells of their churches, no longer summon them to attend a public assembly. The citizen of the twelfth century remains confounded. A short time ago, he was stupified and amazed, by the grandeur, the importance, that the middle class—the *tiers-état*—arrogated to itself:—he now finds these same men, at their own homes, in a state of servitude, weakness, and nonentity, greater than any thing he could have conceived. He passes at once from liberty to servitude. He lately contemplated citizens, exercising the privileges of sovereignty; he now sees them feeble, and powerless. Is it possible he should comprehend this—that he should be able to reconcile two such opposite facts? Would he not, on the contrary, be lost in wonder? If we on our side, we, citizens of the nineteenth century, transport ourselves back to the twelfth; we shall, though in a reversed sense, witness a twofold spectacle of the same nature. If we regard public affairs in general,—the state, the government of the country; we shall perceive that the burgher class, enjoyed no sort of consideration; they were of no importance; they were mere ciphers. Not only so; but if we inquire what opinion they entertained of themselves, what tone they assumed, what they thought of their position, with respect to their relation with the general government of the country; we shall find their language ex-

pressive of an extraordinary degree of fearfulness, and humility. Their former masters, the feudal lords, from whom they wrested their franchises; still treated them, in words at least, with a degree of haughtiness that confounds us, but did not surprise, or irritate them.

Let us enter into the Commune, and observe what passes there. The scene changes;—we are in a fortified place, defended by armed citizens, who levy their own taxes, elect their own magistrates, administer justice, and punish offenders. They assemble to deliberate on their own affairs; none are excluded from these assemblies—they make war, on their own account, even against their lords, and maintain a militia. In a word, they govern themselves—they are sovereigns.

This contrast, is precisely of the same nature, as that which rendered the state of France, in the eighteenth century, so incomprehensible to the citizen of the twelfth—only the parts are reversed. In these days, the People are everything; the Commune nothing:—formerly, the People were nothing; the Commune every thing.

It is evident, gentlemen, that many events, many extraordinary occurrences must have transpired, between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries; many revolutions must have been accomplished, in order to produce so wonderful a change in the social condition of

any class of society. Notwithstanding this change, it cannot be doubted, that the *tiers-état* of 1789, was politically speaking, the descendant, and heir of the burgher class of the twelfth century:—the French nation so haughty so ambitious; assuming such high pretensions; which not only professes to have regenerated, and to govern herself, but aspires to regenerate, and govern the world; is incontestably descended from those Communes who revolted in the twelfth century. The insurrections which then took place were obscure it is true, but the people displayed a noble energy, and sought to deliver themselves from the tyranny of their lords.

We certainly shall not find any explanation of this metamorphosis, in the condition of the Communes, in the twelfth century; it was accomplished, in the interval between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries; and its causes must be sought for during the same period. We shall discover them, as we advance. The origin of the *tiers-état* is however, a most important event in its history: it may not reveal to us all the secrets of its destiny, but at least it will make us acquainted with its primary elements:—its origin may be retraced in its future progress more completely than appearances would lead us to imagine. A description of the state of the Communes in the twelfth century—however im-

perfect it may be—will convince you of this fact.

In order to comprehend this state, we must consider the Communes, under two principal points of view. Two great questions, must here be solved. The first, regards the enfranchisement of the Communes; how the revolution was accomplished; what were its causes; what change it made in the condition of the burghers; what were its effects on general society, on other social classes, on the nation. The second relates to the government of the Communes; to the internal condition of enfranchised towns; to the mutual relations of the citizens between themselves; to the principles, the forms, and the manners which prevailed there.

It is from these two sources,—the change introduced into the social position of the burghers on one hand; and the change effected in their internal government—their municipal condition on the other; that all their influence on modern civilization has flowed. Every fact that this influence has produced, must be referred to one or other of these causes. When we shall have well considered them,—when we thoroughly comprehend the enfranchisement of the Communes on one hand; and of the government on the other; we shall be in possession of the two keys to their history.

It will then only remain for me, to explain in

what particular the various Communes of Europe, differed from each other. The facts I am about to detail, cannot be applied indiscriminately to all the Communes of the twelfth century; to the Communes of Italy, Spain, England, and France. Many of these facts are common to all, but the points of difference, are great and important. I shall point them out as we proceed. They will recur, at a later period, in the history of civilization, and we shall then study them more attentively.

In order to understand the history of the enfranchisement of the Communes, we must recollect what was the state of towns from the fifth to the eleventh century,—from the fall of the Roman Empire, until the period when the communal revolution commenced. Here, I repeat, a wide difference is apparent:—the condition of the towns, varied prodigiously in the several countries of Europe,—nevertheless there are some general facts, common to nearly all of them;—and it is to these, I shall endeavour to confine my observations. When I leave these generalities, and proceed to more special circumstances; I shall treat of such as are peculiar to the Communes of France, especially to those of the north, beyond the Rhone and Loire:—these Communes will form the prominent objects of the picture I am about to sketch.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, gentle-

men, from the fifth to the tenth centuries, the towns, were neither in a state of freedom, or of servitude. In the employment of terms, the same error is prevalent, which (as I recently remarked) occurs, in the portraiture of mankind, and of events. When a society has existed for a considerable time, and its language has been long used; words, acquire a complete, determinate, precise, and in some measure a legal and official signification. Time has introduced, a multitude of ideas into the signification of every term, which are awakened whenever we pronounce the word, but which from their having been successively admitted, cannot indiscriminately be used, in speaking of any particular epoch. The words *servitude*, and *freedom*, for example; convey to our minds ideas, infinitely more precise, and complete, than the corresponding facts of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. If we were to say that towns in the eighth century, were in a state of freedom, we should say far too much;—at the present day we attach to the word *freedom*, a sense which does not accord with the facts that occurred in the eighth century. We should be equally wrong were we to affirm that the towns were in a state of servitude—for that word implies something very different from the municipal condition at that epoch. I repeat it—the towns at that period were neither in a state of freedom, or of

servitude: they suffered all the evils which attend weakness; they were a prey to violence, to the continual depredation of the powerful; but; though subject to such terrific disorders, and in spite of their poverty and depopulated condition, the towns had retained, and still enjoyed, a certain degree of importance. In the greater number of those towns, the clergy, the bishop exercised great power, and possessed much influence. They, became the bond of union between the people, and their conquerors, preserved in some degree the independence of the town, and covered it with the shield of religion. Moreover, many relics of the ancient Roman institutions still subsisted in the towns. We often hear at this period,—and facts of that nature have been carefully collected by MM. de Savigny, and Hullmann, and Mlle. de Lézardière, &c.—of the convocation of the senate, of the *Curiae*, and of public assemblies. Magistrates were appointed, who executed in the *Curia*, a multitude of acts relating to civil life—such as wills, and donations—in the same manner, the Roman municipal magistrates had done. The remains of activity, and urban liberty, it is true, gradually disappeared. Barbarism, disorder, and misery, were continually increasing, and contributed to accelerate the depopulation. The settlement of the lords of the territory, in the

country, and the rising preponderance of agricultural life, still further tended to cause the decay of the towns. The bishops themselves, so soon as they had entered within the pale of feudality, attached less importance to their municipal existence. At last, when feudality had completely triumphed,—the towns, without being reduced to the condition of the *coloni*, were subjected to the control of a lord, were included in some fief, and thus lost a portion of the independence they had retained, even in the most barbarous times,—during the first period of invasion. The condition of the towns therefore, from the fifth century, until the complete organization of feudality, was continually growing worse.

When feudality had become firmly established, when the place of every man was determined, and he was as it were fixed to the soil,—when the erratic life had ceased,—the towns after a certain time began to regain some importance ; and activity once more began to display itself within them. Human activity, as you well know, resembles the fertility of the earth ; so soon as the convulsion has ceased it reappears, and causes every thing to shoot forth, and bloom. With the most remote glimmering of order, and peace ; the hopes of man revive ; and with his hopes, his industry.

This is what occurred in the towns. When

the feudal system, had become in some measure established, new wants were felt by the possessors of fiefs, they acquired a certain taste for progress, and amelioration; this gave rise to some little industry, and commerce, in the towns on their domains; wealth, and population, though slowly, increased within them. Amongst the circumstances which have contributed to produce this effect; one, in my estimation, has been too little remarked. I mean the right of asylum in the Churches. Before the Communes were constituted; before their strength, and their fortifications, were able to offer an asylum to the miserable population of the country; when the Church, was the only place of safety,—that circumstance alone was sufficient to draw many unfortunate persons, many fugitives, into the towns. They came to take refuge, in, or near the Church; and not only men of the lowest class, serfs, and *coloni* sought this protection, but frequently men of consequence—rich outlaws. The chronicles of those days, are full of such instances. We read of men, who though powerful themselves; yet being pursued by a still more powerful neighbour, or by the king himself; abandoned their domains, carried away all that was moveable, retired into a town, and placed themselves under the protection of the Church—in short became citizens. These refugees, must I think have had considerable influence upon the progress of towns, they

introduced into them, wealth, and some of the elements of a class, superior to the mass of the inhabitants. We know besides, that wherever a considerable number of persons, have become congregated together, others speedily join them; partly for security, partly from the natural social tendency of mankind.

After the feudal system had become in some measure regularized; the concurrence of all these causes, permitted the towns to regain a small portion of power. But security, did not so speedily return. It is true that the erratic life had ceased, but the erratic life, had its advantages, for it was a great means of satiating the passions of the conquerors,—the new proprietors of the soil. Whenever they desired to pillage, they sallied forth on a predatory expedition, they sought fortune, and lands elsewhere. But when the country had become in some measure settled; when it was necessary to renounce this vagrant mode of conquest; their eagerness for plunder still remained; their rude wants, and violent desires, were still unsatiated. But their weight fell on those who were in their power—on the inhabitants of towns. Instead of seeking booty at a distance, they found it at their doors. The extortions practised by the lords on the burghers, were redoubled after the close of the tenth century. When the proprietor of a domain which included a town within its limits, desired

to obtain either money or spoil ; he gratified his avarice, by using violence towards the burghers. At this epoch, citizens complained most bitterly of the total want of commercial security. Merchants who returned from a journey, were unable to enter their towns in safety:—the roads, the approaches, were continually beset by the lord, and his retainers. At the precise moment when industry was revived, public security was at its lowest ebb. Nothing is so annoying to a man, as to be hindered in his work, and robbed of the fruits of his labours. He is much more offended, and enraged, by this spoliation, than by oppression in a more fixed, and monotonous state of existence ; when he is only despoiled of that which was not the result of his own activity, which had not awakened in his heart the joys of hope.

There is in the progressive movement, by which individuals, and nations, are raised to fortune, a spirit of resistance to oppression, much more energetic than in any other situation.

This, gentlemen, is the state of towns, in the tenth century: they had become stronger, and more important ; they were richer,—their interests were therefore greater. It had become more than ever necessary for them to defend those interests ; for their strength, their riches, their importance, occasioned much envy amongst the nobles,—the danger, and the evil, increased

with the means of resistance. Besides, the feudal system offered to all who were connected with it, a perpetual example of resistance; it by no means presented to the mind any idea of an organized, and energetic government, capable of preserving order by its sole intervention, and able to overcome all opposition. It displayed on the contrary, the continual spectacle of individual will, refusing to submit to power. Such was the situation of the greater number of the possessors of fiefs, with respect to their suzerains; of the small proprietors, with respect to the great lords; so that, at the period when towns were oppressed and tormented, at the moment when they had new and great interests to maintain; they had before their eyes a continual example of insurrection. The feudal system rendered a great service to humanity, by exhibiting a continual example of individual will, developing itself in all its energy. The lesson was not lost: notwithstanding their weakness, and the prodigious inequality between their condition, and that of their lords, the towns revolted on every side.

It is difficult to assign a precise date to this event. It is generally stated that the enfranchisement of the Communes commenced in the eleventh century:—but in every great event how many unknown, and disastrous attempts are made, before the successful effort is accom-

plished ! Providence, is prodigal of the courage, the virtues, the sufferings, even the life of man, in order to accomplish His designs; and it is only after a multitude of unnoticed labours have apparently been fruitless; after many noble minds have sunk into discouragement, believing every thing to be lost; that the cause triumphs. This doubtless occurred in the Communes. There assuredly, occurred in the eighth and ninth centuries, many attempts at resistance, many struggles for enfranchisement, which not only miscarried, but the remembrance of which, has passed away without glory, as without success. We cannot doubt, however, that these attempts influenced subsequent events; they animated, and sustained the spirit of liberty, and prepared the way for the great insurrections of the eleventh century.

I use the term *insurrection* designedly. The enfranchisement of the Communes in the eleventh century, was the fruit of an actual insurrection, of a real war, declared by the population of the towns, against their lords. The first facts that we meet with in the history of similar events, are invariably the rising of the citizens, who arm themselves with whatever weapons they may happen to have at hand; the expulsion of the retainers of the lord, who have been 'sent to levy some extortion; an attack on the castle, or some other warlike proceeding. If the insurrection miscarries, what is the first act of the conqueror? He orders the

instant demolition of the fortifications erected by the citizens, not only around their town, but around every private dwelling. Whenever a confederation was formed, when all had promised to act in concert, and sworn the oath of fidelity to the Commune; the first act of every citizen, was to place his own habitation in a state of defence. Many Communes whose names are now almost forgotten,—for instance, the little town of Vézelay, in Nivernois,—sustained a long and energetic contest against their lord. The Abbot of Vézelay was at length victorious, and instantly commanded the destruction of the fortifications of the burghers' houses:—the names of many citizens, whose fortified houses were thus destroyed, have been preserved.

If we enter these dwellings of our ancestors, if we study the form of their construction, and the mode of life which it reveals, we shall see that all is devoted to war—that every thing is impressed with a martial character.

The ordinary construction of a burgher's house in the twelfth century—so far as we can now ascertain—consisted in general of three stories, a single apartment in each story. The apartment on the ground-floor was used as a hall, where the family lived, and took their meals; the first floor was much elevated, as a place of security, and this is altogether the most remarkable point in the architecture. The master of the house, and his wife, inhabited this story. The

house was almost invariably flanked by towers on the angles, usually square;—another symptom of war, and mode of defence. On the second floor there was an apartment, the use of which is uncertain; but which probably was occupied by the children, and the remainder of the household. In many instances a small platform, evidently intended for an observatory, surmounted the building. The architecture of such a house suggests the idea of war. War, was the prevailing character, the true name of the movement, which produced the enfranchisement of the Communes.

After war has continued for a certain length of time—no matter who are the combatants—peace naturally succeeds. The treaties of peace between the Communes, and their adversaries were in fact charters. The municipal charters were actual treaties of peace, between the burghers and their lords.

The insurrection was general. When I use the word *general*, I do not mean that there was any concert, any coalition amongst all the burghers of a country;—by no means. The situation of the Communes was every where nearly the same; they were all liable to the same danger, they were a prey to the same evils. Having all acquired similar means of defence, they employed those means about the same period. It may be, that example was not without its effects; that the success of one or

two Communes was contagious. Many charters appear as if they had been formed on the same model ;—that of Noyon, for instance, served as a pattern to those of Beauvais, Saint-Quentin, &c. I doubt, however, if the force of example was so great as we commonly imagine. Communications were difficult, and of rare occurrence; oral intelligence, was vague and transitory; there is much reason to think that the insurrection, was rather the result of a similarity of situation, than of a spontaneous and general movement. When I say *general*, as I before observed, I mean that this movement was almost universal; but by no means, concerted, and unanimous. Every thing was individual, and local; every Commune fought its own battle against its lord; every insurrection was confined to its own locality.

The vicissitudes of this conflict were very great. Not only did success vibrate between the contending parties; but even after peace appeared to be restored, after the charter had been sworn to on each side, it was violated and eluded on all kinds of pretences. Kings, performed an important part during the alternations of this contest. I shall speak of this more in detail when I proceed to discuss royalty itself. The influence of this institution on the movement which produced the enfranchisement of the Communes, has been sometimes, in my

opinion, too much exaggerated, sometimes too much underrated. I shall only observe at present, that the interference of the regal power was often solicited, both by the lords, and their vassals; that it frequently performed opposite parts; that it has acted first on one principle, then on another; that its intentions, designs, and conduct, were incessantly changing; but that taking it altogether, it has effected much, and its results have been more productive of good than of evil.

Notwithstanding these continual vicissitudes, notwithstanding the continued violation of charters; the enfranchisement of the Communes was accomplished in the twelfth century. Europe, and particularly France, which for an entire century had been a prey to insurrection, now abounded in chartered towns. These charters however, were not allequally favourable. Some of the Communes enjoyed their privileges in greater security than others; but yet all derived some advantage from them. The fact prevailed—the right was recognised.

Let us now, gentlemen, endeavour to ascertain the more immediate results of this great fact, and what changes it introduced into the situation of the citizens with respect to society.

At first it did not effect any change in the relations of the citizens with the general government of the country, with what we now term the

state. They took no more part in it than they formerly did: all remained local, restricted to the limits of the fief.

One circumstance alone will modify this assertion:—a certain tie was established between the burghers and the king. The burghers frequently implored the aid of the king against their lord, or solicited his royal guarantee, when the charter was promised, or sworn to. The lords, on their side, had often referred their disputes with the burghers, to the decision of the king. At the request of each of these parties, the regal power had frequently interfered in the quarrel; from thence resulted a frequent, and occasionally an intimate relation between the burghers, and the king. In this manner the citizens became connected with the head of the state, and begun to have relations with the general government.

Although society still continued local, the enfranchisement of the Communes had created a new class of men. There had not been any coalition between the burghers of different towns; they did not as a class, possess any public, and general existence. But the country was filled with men, whose condition was similar, who had the same interests, the same manners; between whom it was impossible a certain bond of union should not be gradually formed, which at length would create a new social class

—the Burgher class. The formation of this great social class was the necessary consequence of the enfranchisement of the Communes.

We must not imagine that the burgher class was, at that time, what it has since become. Its condition has undergone many changes: besides, its primitive elements were essentially different from those of later times. In the twelfth century, it was chiefly composed of merchants, of traders engaged in limited commercial dealings, and of small proprietors of lands or houses, who had become resident in towns. Three centuries afterwards, the burgher class comprehended also, lawyers, physicians, men of letters, and local magistrates. This class of society was gradually formed, and was composed of very dissimilar elements:—its gradual formation, and the variety of its elements, have not been sufficiently noticed in history. The burgher class, is frequently spoken of, as if it had been at all periods composed of the same elements. The idea is absurd. It is perhaps in the diversity of its composition at various epochs of its history, that we ought to endeavour to trace the secret of its destiny. So long as it did not include either magistrates, or men of letters; it did not possess the same character, or hold the same importance in the state, that it afterwards did in the sixteenth century. In order to comprehend the vicissitudes of its fortune, and power, we

ought to observe attentively the successive rise of new professions, new moral situations, and a new intellectual state, within it. In the twelfth century, I repeat, it was only composed of small traders, who retired into the towns after having made their sales and purchases; and of the proprietors of houses, or small domains, who had fixed their residence there. These were the primary elements of the burgher class in Europe.

The third grand result of the enfranchisement of the Communes, was the struggle between classes,—a struggle which fills modern history, and indeed is the principal fact it contains. Modern Europe has sprung from the conflict of the various classes of society. Elsewhere, gentlemen, as I have already remarked, this conflict produced very different results:—in Asia, for instance, one class completely triumphed; the system of caste succeeded that of classes, and society became immutable. Nothing of this kind, thanks to Heaven! occurred in Europe. No single class has been able to conquer and subject the others; conflict, instead of tending to produce immutability, has become a cause of progress; the relations between different classes; the necessity which existed of their alternately combating or yielding; the variety in their interests, and their passions; the desire of conquest without the power to accomplish it:—from all these causes has probably sprung, the

most fertile, the most energetic principle of development in European civilization. A constant warfare between classes continued, they mutually detested each other : an infinite diversity of situation, interests, and manners, produced a strong moral hostility between them : but, notwithstanding this, they have become gradually reconciled, assimilated to each other, and extended ; in every country of Europe, a certain public spirit, a certain community of interests, ideas, and sentiments, have arisen, have become developed, and in the end have triumphed over diversity and conflict. In France, for example, the social and moral separation of classes, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was still immense ; but there cannot be a doubt, that their amalgamation was already begun, and that, even at that time, the French nation did not consist of one class exclusively, but comprehended all,—that all were animated by a certain common sentiment, had a common social existence, strongly impressed with a national character.

Thus, the national unity, which in modern Europe has now become so striking a fact, which tends to further development, to a still higher degree of purification, to still greater splendour ; was the fruit of dissimilarity, enmity, and war.

These, gentlemen, are the grand, social, visible, and outward effects of the revolution, which

we are now considering. Let us examine what were its moral results; what changes it produced in the minds of the citizens, what moral influence their new situation exercised over them.

There is one fact, which must strike us most forcibly, when we study the relations of the burgher class, not only in the tenth century, but in previous ages, with the state in general, with the government, and with the general interests of the country,—I mean the extraordinary timidity of the burghers, their humility, the excessive modesty of their claims to be allowed a share in the government of their country; and the slight concessions which satisfied them. They nowhere exhibit that true political spirit, which aspires to influence others, to reform, and govern, society; they appear destitute of daring thoughts, and noble ambition; they are nothing more than honest, and prudent, freedmen. In the political world, noble ambition, and fearlessness of mind, can only flow from two sources; either from the feeling of vast personal importance, of a prodigious power, exercised over the destiny of others, in a widely-extended sphere; or from the energetic sentiment of complete independence, the certainty of individual freedom, the consciousness that our fate is uncontrolled by the will of any human being. To one, or other, of these conditions, appears to

be attached the daring spirit, the noble ambition, which desires an enlarged sphere of action, and looks forward to obtaining splendid results.

Neither of these conditions, is met with in the situation, of the burghers of the middle ages. They were only as you have just seen, important in themselves; they did not exercise any great influence, beyond their own towns over the state in general. It was likewise impossible they should possess any strong feeling of individual independence. It was in vain they had conquered, in vain they had obtained a charter. The burgher of a town, comparing himself with the small landed proprietor who dwelt in his vicinity, and who had just been conquered, did not the less feel his extreme inferiority; he did not experience that proud sentiment of independence, which animated the proprietor of the fief; his freedom was not inherent in himself, he owed it to his association with others, whose support was troublesome and precarious. From thence resulted that reserved character, that timidity of mind, that trembling modesty, that humility of speech, though frequently accompanied by great boldness of conduct, which is so deeply impressed on the character, not only of the burghers who lived in the twelfth century, but on that of their most remote descendants.

They had no taste for great enterprises ; when their destiny compelled them to take part in them, they were uneasy and embarrassed ; they dreaded responsibility ; they felt they were out of their sphere ; they longed for quiet ; and it was easy to treat with them. Therefore, during the progress of the history of Europe, of France especially, we find the burgher class esteemed, considered, adroitly managed, even respected, but rarely feared ; it seldom impressed its adversaries with the idea of a haughty, formidable, and truly political power. This weakness of the citizens of those times is not surprising ; the principal cause of it must be sought in their origin, in those circumstances connected with their enfranchisement, which I have lately described. A noble ambition independent of social conditions ; widely extended, and uncompromising political opinions ; a desire to interfere in the affairs of the country ; a full conviction of the greatness of man, of the power that belongs to him, if he be capable of exercising it ;—these, gentlemen, are sentiments and dispositions of recent date in Europe, which have sprung from modern civilization ; the fruit of that glorious, and powerful spirit of generalization, which characterizes it, and which cannot fail to assure to the public an influence, a weight in the government of their country, which

the burghers, our ancestors, never possessed, which they were incapable of possessing. (*Applause.*)

On the other hand, they acquired, and displayed, in the conflict of local interests, by which they were surrounded in their narrow sphere of action ; a degree of energy, devotedness, perseverance, and patience, which has never been surpassed. The enterprise in which they were engaged was so arduous, they had to contend against so many dangers, that it was necessary they should display an almost unheard-of courage. A very erroneous idea is entertained, respecting the life of the burghers, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. You have read in the romance of *Quentin Durward*, by Walter Scott, the picture he has drawn of the burgomaster of Liege. His portraiture is that of the stage. He represents the citizen, fat and effeminate; destitute of experience, and boldness, and solely occupied by the desire to pass his life, in ease and tranquillity. But the burghers of those days, gentlemen, never went without their armour, their pikes were continually in their hands, their lives were nearly as tempestuous, as warlike, as severe, as those of the lords they were at war with. It was during this period of incessant danger, of continual striving against the difficulties of practical life, that they acquired that masculine character, that

obstinate energy, which have since been somewhat effaced, in the more peaceful activity of modern times.

None, however, of these social or moral effects of the enfranchisement of the Communes, were fully developed in the twelfth century; it is only in later ages that they have become apparent, and have been clearly discerned. It is nevertheless certain that they date their origin from the primary situation of the Communes, from the mode of their enfranchisement, and the position that the burghers, then assumed in society. I have not therefore erred in presenting them to you to-day. Let us now consider the internal state of the Communes of the twelfth century; how they were governed; what principles, and what facts, presided in the relations of the burghers with one another.

You will recollect, gentlemen, that in speaking of the municipal system which the Roman Empire, bequeathed to the modern world; I asserted that the Roman world, was an immense coalition of municipalities, which had formerly possessed rights equal to those of Rome itself. Each of these towns had formerly been in the same condition as Rome—a small independent republic; making war, and peace, and directing its own government. When these towns became incorporated in the Roman world, all those rights which constitute sovereignty,—the right of

making peace, and war; of legislating, of imposing taxes, &c., were taken from them, and became concentrated in Rome. One sovereign municipality alone remained—Rome: she reigned over a great number of municipalities, which no longer retained any civil existence. The character of the municipal system was changed. Instead of being a political government,—sovereignty in fact, it became a mode of administration. This was the great revolution, which was accomplished under the Roman Empire. The municipal system having become a mode of administration, was reduced to the government of local affairs, and the civil interests of the city. This was the condition of the towns, and of their government, at the fall of the Roman Empire. In the midst of the chaos of barbarism, ideas, as well as facts, became confused; the attributes of sovereignty, and those of administration, were confounded. These distinctions were no longer regarded. Affairs were abandoned to circumstances. The chief persons in a city, were sometimes sovereigns, sometimes magistrates, as necessity might require. When towns revolted, they assumed sovereign power, for the sake of security. In so doing, they were not guided by any political theories, or by any ideas of their own dignity; it was simply to obtain means of resisting the lords, against whom they rebelled, that they assumed the right to call out the militia; to tax themselves, in order

to raise money to carry on the war ; to name their chiefs, and their magistrates,—in a word, to exercise self-government. In the interior of towns, the sole object of government was to provide the means of defence, and security. The municipal system, thus reacquired the sovereignty, of which it had been deprived by the Roman conquests. The Communes, once more possessed sovereign power. This is the political character of their enfranchisement.

This sovereignty, was however by no means complete. Some traces still remained of an extrinsic dominion. Sometimes the lord, reserved the right of sending a magistrate into the town, who appointed the municipal magistrates to act with him in the capacity of assessors. Sometimes he had to collect certain revenues ; in other places a tribute was secured to him. Sometimes the extrinsic sovereignty of the Commune passed into the hands of the king.

The Communes themselves, when they in their turn entered within the pale of feudality, had vassals, became suzerains, and possessed all that portion of sovereignty, which was inherent in suzerainty. The rights they held from their feudal position, and those which they had acquired by insurrection, were confounded, and they thus had a twofold title to sovereign power. Let us see, so far as the incomplete records we possess will permit, what was the nature of

the government of the Communes, at least in the early times. All the inhabitants were members of the Communal Assembly; all who had sworn fidelity to the Commune,—and whoever dwelt in the town was compelled to take that oath—were summoned, by the ringing of a bell, to the general assembly. There the magistrates were nominated. The number of the magistrates, and the nature of their official duties, were very variable. So soon as the magistrates were named, the assembly was dissolved, and the magistrates governed alone; frequently in an arbitrary manner, without advice, and almost without control. New elections, and popular commotions, were the only means of enforcing responsibility in those days.

You perceive that the internal organization of the Communes may be reduced to two simple elements: the general assembly of the inhabitants, and a government invested with almost arbitrary power; under no control excepting that of popular commotion, and insurrection. It was impossible,—especially in the then existing state of manners,—to establish a regular government, or any certain guarantees for order, and duration. The greater part of the population of the Communes were plunged in such a state of profound ignorance, brutality, and ferocity, that it was extremely difficult to govern them. At the expiration of a very short time,

there was nearly as little security in the internal state of the Commune, as there had been in the relations of the citizens with their lord. But there was speedily formed a superior class of citizens. The cause of this, you will comprehend without difficulty. The state of ideas, and of social relations, led to the establishment of incorporated companies,—of guilds. A system of privileges was introduced into the interior of the Commune; and consequently much inequality of condition. A certain number of rich, and respectable citizens, soon appeared on one side, and a labouring population, more or less numerous, on the other, who, notwithstanding their inferiority, had great influence on the affairs of the Commune. The Communes were therefore divided into a superior class of citizens (*haute bourgeoisie*), and a population subject to all the errors and vices of a mob. The superior class, had at once to contend against the difficulty of governing the lower orders, and the continual attempts of the former lord of the Commune to regain his power. This was the situation of the Communes, not only in France, but throughout Europe, until the sixteenth century. This was perhaps the principal cause, which prevented the Communes in many countries of Europe, and especially in France, from assuming all the political importance they might have done. There was an incessant conflict between the

blind, ferocious, unrestrained democratic spirit, of the lower orders; and the timid, and mercantile ideas of their superiors; who showed the greatest readiness to arrange their differences with the king, or the former lords,—to the end that order, and peace, might be re-established in the Commune. It was impossible that the Communes, divided into these two parties, could obtain an important position in the state.

All these effects had not become apparent in the twelfth century, but they might be foreseen, in the character of the insurrection; in the manner of its commencement; in the state of the different elements of the communal population.

These, gentlemen, if I am not mistaken, are the principal characteristics, the general results, of the enfranchisement of the Communes, and of their internal government. I have endeavoured to explain that these facts were not so uniform, so universal, as I have described them. Great diversities occur in the history of the Communes of Europe. For example, in Italy, and in the south of France, the Roman municipal system still prevailed, the population was not nearly so much divided, as it was in the north, there was not so much inequality in their condition. Therefore, the communal organization was much better—perhaps this was caused by Roman traditions, perhaps, by the more prosperous condition of the people. In the North,

the feudal system prevailed in the Communes. Every thing was subordinate to the conflict with the lords. The Communes of the South, were much more occupied with their internal organization, with the work of progress, and amelioration. We feel that they were certain to become independent republics. The destiny of the Communes of the North, especially in France, was more rude, less complete—they were reserved for a less noble development. If we examine the Communes of Germany, Spain, and England, we shall discover many other differences. I am unable to enter into these details at present; but we shall have occasion to remark some of them as we advance in the history of civilization. All things, gentlemen, exhibit great similarity of appearance, at their origin. Variety, is not exhibited till a later period: but at length a new development commences, which impels societies towards that free, and noble unity,—the glorious aim of the efforts, and the hopes, of mankind.

LECTURE VIII.

GENTLEMEN,

I have not yet explained to you the entire plan of this course. I began by describing its object to you; I then proceeded, without noticing the complete character of European civilization, without indicating, at the same time, the point of departure, the route, and the goal,—its commencement, its progress, and its end. But we now have arrived at an epoch, when a comprehensive view—a general sketch of that portion of the world we are studying, becomes necessary. The historical periods, we have until now considered, illustrate, as it were, themselves; their results, are immediate and apparent. Those, on which we are about to enter, cannot be comprehended, they cannot even excite a lively interest, unless we connect them with their indirect, and remote consequences. In so vast a study, a moment occurs, when we

are not contented any longer to go forward in darkness, through unknown paths,—when we desire not only to know from whence we have come, where we are, but also whither we are going. This is what we now experience. The period we are about to consider, is not intelligible, its importance cannot be appreciated, excepting by the relations which connect it with modern times. Its true signification, was not revealed till a very late period.

We have considered almost all the essential elements of European civilization. I say almost;—for I have not yet spoken of Monarchy. The decisive crisis of the development of Monarchy, did not occur till about the twelfth, or even the thirteenth century. It was scarcely established before that epoch,—had scarcely begun to assume its definite place in modern society. This is the reason, that I have not sooner spoken of it. It will form the subject of my next Lecture. Excepting this, I repeat, we have considered all the great elements of European civilization; we have traced the origin of the Feudal Aristocracy, of the Church, and the Communes; we have observed the institutions, that are in accordance with those facts; and not only the institutions, but the principles, the ideas, that those facts are certain to awaken in the mind. Thus with respect to Feudality, we have traced the origin of the modern family, of

domestic life; we have beheld the energetic demonstration of the sentiment of personal independence, and the place that sentiment must have occupied, in the progress of our civilization. In regard to the Church, we have seen the rise of a purely religious society; its relations with civil life; the theocratic principle; the separation of the spiritual, from the temporal power; the first flames of persecution, the first efforts to secure liberty of conscience. The rising Communes, exhibit an association founded on principles totally dissimilar to those of Feudality or the Church:—we there distinguish the diversity between social classes; their conflicts; the first, and deeply impressed features, of the character of modern citizens—a timid spirit, united to great mental energy, and the turbulence of demagogues, to the love of order. All the elements, in a word, which have concurred to form European society; all that Europe has been, all that ever occupied her, has been already brought under your observation.

Let us now, gentlemen, place ourselves in the centre of modern Europe; I do not say Europe in our own time, after the prodigious metamorphosis we have witnessed, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I ask, do you recognise there the same society, we have studied in the twelfth century? The difference is pro-

digious! I have already remarked this difference so far as respects the Communes; I have endeavoured to show, how little resemblance there was, between the *tiers-état* of the eighteenth century, and that of the twelfth. Try the Feudal system, and the Church, by the same rule, you will be struck with the same metamorphosis. There was as little resemblance between the nobles, of the court of Louis XV., and the feudal aristocracy; between the Church of the Cardinal de Bernis, and that of the Abbot Suger; as there was between the *tiers-état* of the eighteenth century, and the burghers, of the twelfth. During the interval between these periods, society became totally changed, although its elements had been already established.

I wish clearly to trace, the general and essential character, of this transformation.

From the fifth, to the twelfth century; society was composed of kings, a lay-aristocracy, a clergy, citizens, serfs, civil and religious authorities, the principles, in a word, of all that constitutes a nation, and a government—yet there was no government, no nation. There was, properly speaking, no people; no actual government in the sense we at present attach to those words: nothing of the kind existed during the period we are considering. We meet with a

multitude of partial forces, special facts, and local institutions ; but nothing general, or public, nothing political, no real nationality.

Consider, on the contrary, Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ; we every where perceive two grand objects occupying the theatre of the world :—the government, and the people. The influence of a general power over the whole of the country, and the influence of the country over the power which governs it, form the social character of that epoch : the relations between these two great forces, their alliance, or their conflict, are the subjects of its history. The nobles, the clergy, the citizens, all these classes, all these peculiar forces, only appear in the second line, they are almost overshadowed by these two great bodies—the people, and their government.

This, gentlemen, if I am not mistaken, is the essential feature which distinguishes modern Europe, from Europe in its primitive state,—this is the metamorphosis, which was accomplished between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The secret of this must be sought for in the period between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, which we are about to consider. It has a distinctive character, as the period of transition from the primitive, to the modern state of Europe. This fact gives to it importance, and historical interest. If it were not considered

under this point of view, if its consequences were not also investigated ; not only would it appear incomprehensible, but its history would be wearisome, and would presently cause disgust. Viewed only in itself, independent of its results, it is a period without character ; a period in which confusion was continually increasing, without any apparent cause ; a period of undirected movement, of unsuccessful agitation. Kings, nobles, the clergy, and the citizens,—all the elements of social life appeared to move round the same circle, incapable either of progress, or repose. Attempts of all kinds were made. They all miscarried. Endeavours were made to establish governments, to found a system, which should secure public liberty. Even religious reforms were attempted ; but nothing succeeded, nothing was accomplished. If ever the human race appeared devoted to an agitated, and yet immutable destiny, to incessant yet fruitless toil, it was in the interval between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

I know but one work, where this physiognomy is portrayed with truth,—I mean the *History of the Dukes of Burgundy*, by M. de Barante. I do not merely speak of the air of truth, which pervades his pictures of manners, and his narrative of events ;—but of that general fidelity, which makes the entire work ; a perfect image, a true mirror, of the whole period, of which he reveals the agitated but monotonous character.

Considered on the contrary, in its relation with what succeeded,—as the transition from primitive to modern Europe, this epoch becomes illuminated and enlivened. We discover in it a unity, a direction, and a progress:—its unity, and its interest, consist in the slow, and secret labour, which was accomplished in it.

The history of European civilization, gentlemen, may therefore be divided into three great periods. *1st.* The period which I shall call that of origin, and formation;—a period when the various elements of our society emerged from chaos, entered into existence, and displayed themselves under their native forms, with the principles which animated them; this period extended *almost* to the *twelfth* century. *2dly.* The second period, was a time of experiment, and trial; the different elements of social order approached each other; entered into mutual combinations, and intimate relations, without producing any thing general, regular, and durable; this condition did not, properly speaking, cease before the sixteenth century. *3dly.* The last, was the period of actual development, when society in Europe, assumed a definite form, when it followed a determinate direction, and advanced rapidly, and with a common effort towards a clearly defined, and precise object; this is the period which commenced in the sixteenth century, and at present pursues its course.

Such, gentlemen, as it appears to me, is the

spectacle that European civilization, in its collective character, exhibits ; such is the view of it I shall endeavour to present to you. We shall to-day, enter on the consideration of the second period. We must here attempt to discover the grand crises, the determining causes, of the social transformation which have resulted from it.

The first great event which presents itself—which, as it were, opens the epoch we are speaking of,—is the breaking out of the Crusades. They commenced at the close of the eleventh, and were continued during the twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. They were assuredly of great importance in the history of civilization, for since their occurrence they have never ceased to occupy the attention of philosophical historians ; all have felt—without however being able to assign any cause for their belief—that the Crusades, were of the number of those influences, which change the condition of nations, and which it is essential to study, in order to comprehend the general progress of events.

The first characteristic of the Crusades, is their universality :—all Europe took part in them,—they were the first *European event*. Before the Crusades, the different countries of Europe, had never been simultaneously moved by the same cause, or actuated by the same sentiment. Europe, as a whole, did not exist. The Crusades animated all Christian Europe. France supplied

the greater portion of the first crusading army; but Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and English, were also found in its ranks. In the second and third Crusades, the whole of Christendom was engaged. Nothing like it had ever been seen before.

This was not all:—although the Crusades were an European event, they were also a national event in each separate country; all classes were animated by the same impression, yielded to the same idea, and abandoned themselves to the same impulse. Kings, nobles, priests, citizens, and the rural population; all took the same part, the same interest in the Crusades. The moral unity of nations was exhibited; a fact as new as that of European unity.

When events of this nature are met with in the infancy of nations; in those periods when they act spontaneously, freely, without premeditation, without any political design, or any combination with the government; we recognise what are termed in history heroic events—the heroic age of nations. The Crusades are, in fact, the heroic event of modern Europe,—a movement at once individual, and general,—national, yet undirected.

That this was their primitive character, is attested by all documents, and proved by facts. Who were the first crusaders? Bands of the lower classes. They set out under the conduct of Peter the Hermit, without preparation, with-

out guides, without chiefs; followed rather than led by a few obscure knights, they traversed Germany, and the Greek Empire, and hurried on, to be dispersed, or to perish in Asia Minor.

The higher classes—the feudal nobility, were seized with the same passion for the Crusades. Under the command of Godfrey de Bouillon, the nobles, and their vassals, departed full of ardour. When they had traversed Asia Minor; the chiefs of the crusading army became lukewarm, and fatigued; they were unsolicitous to continue their route, they entertained views of conquest on their own account, they desired to establish themselves in the country. The army, however, rose *en masse*, and insisted on being led to Jerusalem. The deliverance of Jerusalem was the object of the Crusade;—it was not to gain principalities for Boemondo, or Raymond de Toulouse, that the Crusaders had ventured so far. This popular, national, and European impulse, overcame all the designs of individuals; the chiefs had not sufficient ascendancy over the masses, to cause them to submit to their personal interests. Even kings, who had abstained from taking part in the first Crusade, were carried away by the movement, as well as the people. The great Crusades of the twelfth century were commanded by kings.

I pass on to the close of the thirteenth century. Crusades were still spoken of in Europe, they were even preached with ardour. The popes

excited both monarchs, and their subjects. Councils were held, to recommend expeditions to the Holy Land; but none were undertaken, no one felt any interest respecting them. A change had taken place in the European mind—a change which put an end to the Crusades. Some private expeditions were still made; some nobles, and some troops, still departed for Jerusalem; but the general movement was evidently arrested. But neither the necessity for its continuance, or the facility of carrying it into execution, was diminished. The Mussulmans were more than ever triumphant in Asia. The Christian kingdom, founded at Jerusalem, had fallen into their hands. It appeared necessary to reconquer it. It would have been much easier to succeed at that period, than it was when the Crusades first commenced: a great number of Christians had become established, and were still powerful, in Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. The means of transport, and of operation, were much better understood. But nothing could revive the Crusades. It is evident, that the two great powers of society; sovereigns, on one hand, and the people on the other, no longer desired their continuance.

It has been often repeated that weariness was the cause of this, that Europe was tired of continually invading Asia. This expression, which is so frequently used on similar occasions, is ex-

ceedingly incorrect. It is not possible that human beings can be wearied with what they have not done ; that the labours of their fathers can fatigue them. Weariness, is a personal, not an inherited feeling. The men of the thirteenth century, were not fatigued by the Crusades of the twelfth ; they were influenced by another cause. A great change had taken place in ideas, sentiments, and social conditions. The same desires, the same wants were no longer felt. The same things were no longer believed ; the people refused to believe what their ancestors, were persuaded of. It is a political, and moral metamorphosis of this nature, not weariness, which explains the opposite conduct of successive generations. The pretended weariness attributed to them, is a metaphor destitute of truth.

Two great causes, gentlemen, one of a moral, the other of a social nature, had precipitated Europe into the Crusades.

The moral cause, as you know, was the impulse of religious belief, and religious feelings. From the close of the seventh century, Christianity contended against Mahometanism ; it had become victorious in Europe, (although it had incurred great danger,) and had obliged Mahometanism to confine itself to Spain. Even from thence, Christianity constantly laboured to expel it. The Crusades have been represented as an accidental occurrence, an unforeseen, a special event, excited by the tales of the pilgrims who

had visited Jerusalem, and the preaching of Peter the Hermit. This is not the fact. The Crusades, gentlemen, were the continuation, the acmè of the great conflict, which for four centuries had subsisted between Christianity, and Mahometanism. The theatre of this great contest had hitherto been Europe:—it was then carried into Asia. If I attached any value to those comparisons, those parallels into which historical facts are sometimes made to enter; I could show you that the career of Christianity in Asia was precisely the same, that its destiny there, was exactly similar to that of Mahometanism in Europe. Mahometanism established itself in Spain, where it conquered and founded a kingdom, and several principalities. The Christians did the same in Asia. Their situation in Asia, with regard to the Mahometans, was precisely the same as the situation of the Mahometans in Spain with regard to the Christians. The kingdom of Jerusalem, and the kingdom of Granada, exactly correspond. These resemblances are, however, of very little importance. The great fact is, the conflict between the two religious, and social systems. The Crusades formed the grand crisis of this conflict. This is their historical character, this is the bond which unites them to the general course of events.

Another cause,—the social condition of Europe in the eleventh century, equally contributed to produce them. I have taken care to explain, why, from

the fifth to the eleventh century, it was impossible to establish any general system in Europe; I have endeavoured to show that every thing had become local; and that nations, political, as well as personal existence, and the human mind, had been restricted to a very narrow sphere. At that time the feudal system was in full vigour. After the expiration of a certain time, human thought, and activity refused to be confined within such narrow limits, they desired to break through their barriers. The erratic life had ceased; but the love of its excitement, and adventures, still remained. Nations precipitated themselves into the Crusades, as into a new existence more extended and varied, which sometimes recalled the remembrance of barbaric freedom, sometimes opened the perspective of a vast futurity.

Such, in my opinion, were in the twelfth century, the determining causes of the Crusades. At the close of the thirteenth century, neither of these causes continued to exist. Man, and society, were so greatly changed, that neither the moral impulse, or the social want, which had impelled Europe to invade Asia, were any longer felt. I know not if there be many amongst you, gentlemen, who have read the original chroniclers of the Crusades, and if it has ever occurred to you to compare those who were contemporaneous with the first Crusade, with those who lived at the close of the twelfth, and thirteenth centuries,—

for instance, Albert d'Aix, Robert the Monk, and Raymond d'Agiles, who took part in the first Crusade; with William of Tyre, and Jacques de Vitry. When we compare these two classes of authors, it is impossible not to be struck by the contrast they afford. The older chroniclers write in an animated manner, their imaginations are excited, they describe with enthusiasm the events of the Crusade. But their minds are exceedingly contracted, they have no ideas beyond the circumscribed sphere in which they move, they are ignorant of science, full of prejudices, incapable of forming an opinion on what was passing around them; even on the events they relate. Read, on the contrary, the *History of the Crusades*, by William of Tyre; you will be astonished to find he writes almost like a modern historian; his mind is fully developed, his views are extended, and free. He exhibits extraordinary political intelligence, general views, and a just appreciation of causes and effects. Jacques de Vitry offers an example of a different kind of development; he is a man of general information, and does not confine himself to the affairs of the Crusades, but describes the state of manners, the geography, natural history, and political science, of the countries he visited; he observes, and describes the world. In a word, there is between the chroniclers of the first Crusades, and the historians of the last, striking dissimilarity; which

betokens an actual revolution in the state of the human mind.

This change is especially conspicuous in the different manner in which these two classes of authors speak of the Mahometans. The early chroniclers, and consequently the early crusaders,—for the chroniclers only express the general feeling,—speak of the Mahometans with un concealed hatred; it is evident that they were unacquainted with them, that they did not seek to form a correct opinion respecting them, and only considered them with reference to the religious hostility subsisting between the two parties. No social relations appear to have existed between them; they detested, and made war on each other—that was all. William of Tyre, Jacques de Vitry, Bernard the Treasurer, speak very differently of the Mahometans; we feel in reading their histories, that, although enemies, they no longer considered the Mahometans as monsters; that, to a certain point, they participated in their ideas, that they had lived amongst them, that some relations, and even a sort of sympathy, had arisen between them. William of Tyre pronounced a fine eulogium on Nourreddin; and Bernard the Treasurer did the same on Saladin. They even went so far, as to place the manners, and conduct, of the Mussulmans, in opposition to those of the Christians, in order to satirize the latter; as Tacitus described the manners of the

Germans, as affording a contrast to those of Rome. You cannot fail to notice, what an astonishing change must have been effected in the interval between these two periods ; since you find in the last a freedom, an impartiality of mind,—even when speaking of those enemies to Christianity, against whom the Crusades were directed, —which would have filled the early Crusaders with surprise, and indignation.

This, gentlemen, was the first, the principle effect of the Crusades. It was an important step towards perfect intellectual freedom, a progressive movement towards liberal, and enlightened ideas. Although commenced in the name, and under the influence of religious belief, the Crusades deprived religious ideas, I do not say, of their legitimate influence, but, of their exclusive, and despotic power, over the human mind. This result,—certainly most unexpected,—was produced by various causes. The first was evidently the novelty, the extent, the variety, of the spectacle, which was presented to the eyes of the Crusaders. The same thing happened to them, which happens to travellers. It is a common saying, that travelling enlarges the mind ; that the habit of observing different countries, different manners, and opinions, extends the ideas, and divests the judgment of ancient prejudices. This truth was rendered evident amongst those travellers, whom we call the Crusaders ; the very fact of having seen

a multitude of things hitherto unknown; of having witnessed customs, and manners opposed to those in which they had been brought up; was certain to produce this effect on them. They entered, besides, into relations with two forms of civilization, not only different, but much further advanced than their own,—with Greek society on one hand, and Mussulman society, on the other. There cannot be a doubt, that although civilization in Greek society was enervated, perverted, and decaying; yet it influenced the Crusaders as greatly as we might expect a society so much more polished, advanced, and enlightened, than their own would have done. Mahometan society produced on them a similar effect. It is curious to read in the chronicles, the impression that the Crusaders made on the minds of the Mussulmans; who at first regarded them as barbarians, as the most rude, ferocious, and ignorant men, they had ever seen. The Crusaders, on their part, were struck by the riches, and the elegant manners of the Mussulmans. To this first impression, succeeded frequent relations between the two peoples. These relations became extended, and were much more important than is generally supposed. Not only had the Christians of the East habitual relations with the Mussulmans, but the people of the East, and those of the West, became acquainted with, visited, and mingled with each other. It is not a long time since one of

those learned men, who confer so much honour on France,—M. Abel Rémusat,—has shown what frequent relations, subsisted between the Christian kings and the Mogul emperors. Ambassadors from the Mogul empire, were sent to the Frank kings,—to St. Louis amongst others,—to request their alliance, and to persuade them to recommence the Crusades, for the common advantage of the Moguls, and the Christians, against the Turks. And not only were diplomatic, and official relations established between sovereigns; but these relations led to others, more frequent, and diversified, between the people of both countries.

I quote the words of M. Abel Rémusat.*

“ Many Italian, French, and Flemish monks, were intrusted with diplomatic missions to the Grand Khan. Many Moguls of rank visited Rome, Barcelona, Valencia, Paris, London, and Northampton; and a Franciscan, from Naples, was archbishop of Pekin. His successor, was a professor of theology, from the University of Paris. But how many other persons less known would follow in the suite of these personages, either as slaves, or attracted by the hope of gain, and the desire of visiting countries hitherto unknown! Chance has preserved the names of some of these. The first envoy, whom the Tartars sent to

* *Mémoires sur les relations politiques des Princes chrétiens avec les Empereurs Mongols. Deuxième Mémoire*, pp. 154—157.

the King of Hungary, was an Englishman who had been banished for his crimes, and who, after wandering for some time in Asia, at length took service with the Moguls. A Flemish cordelier, met with a woman of Metz, named *Paquette*, in the wilds of Tartary, who had been carried off from Hungary; also a Parisian goldsmith, who had a brother living in Paris; and a young man from Rouen, who had been at the siege of Belgrade. He also saw Russians, Hungarians, and Flemings. A chanter, named *Robert*, who had travelled all through Asia, returned home, and died in the Cathedral of Chartres. A Tartar supplied helmets to the army of Philip-le-Bel. Jean de Plancarpin, met a Russian gentleman near Gayouk, whom he calls *Temer*, and who acted as an interpreter; many merchants from Breslau, Poland, and Austria, accompanied him in his journey into Tartary. Others returned with him through Russia, —mostly Genoese, Pisans, and Venetians. Two merchants from Venice, whom chance had led to Bokhara, followed a Mogul sent by Houlagou to Kublai-Khan. They remained many years in China, and Tartary, returned with letters from the Grand Khan to the pope; again revisited the Grand Khan, one of them carrying with him his son, the celebrated Marco Polo; and, after remaining some time with Kublai-Khan, returned to Venice. Journeys of this kind were not less frequent in the succeeding century. Amongst them may be named those of John Mandeville, an English physician, Oderic de Frisal, Pegoletti, William de Bouldeselle, and many others. We may readily imagine that the travels, of which

the remembrance has been preserved ; form a very small proportion of those which were undertaken ; and that in those days, many more persons were able to perform distant journeys, than to write an account of them. Many of these adventurers, also, would establish themselves, and die in the countries that they visited. Others, would return to their homes, as undistinguished as when they left them ; but having their imaginations filled with what they had seen, they would describe their travels to their families, and doubtless exaggerate every thing that had happened to them. Their recitals however, though mingled with many ridiculous fables, would leave behind them useful recollections and traditions, capable of being turned to advantage. Thus, in Germany, in Italy, and in France, in the monasteries, amongst the nobles, and even in the lowest ranks of society, many precious seeds were sown, destined to bear fruit at a later period. These ignorant travellers, carried the arts of their country into distant lands, and brought back with them in return other acquisitions, not less valuable ; thus, unconsciously, being the means of effecting exchanges, much more important than those of commerce. By their means, not only was the trade in silk, in porcelain, and other Indian commodities, much extended, and facilitated, and new outlets opened to industry, and commercial activity ; but, what was much better, foreign manners, unknown nations, and extraordinary productions, were presented to the imagination of Europeans, which, since the fall of the Roman Empire, had been confined within too narrow a

circle. The most anciently civilized, the finest and most populous of the four quarters of the globe, at length became of some importance to Europe. The arts, the religions, and the languages of the East, began to be studied; and it was even in contemplation to found a professorship of the Tartar language in the University of Paris. Exaggerated tales, which however were soon investigated and appreciated, diffused more varied and accurate ideas. The world seemed to be extended in the East; geography was prodigiously improved; the passion for new discovery became the form under which the adventurous spirit of Europe appeared. The idea of another hemisphere, was divested of improbability, when our own portion of the globe was better known:—it was in endeavouring to trace the Zipangri of Marco Polo, that Columbus discovered the New World.”

You see, gentlemen, what a vast, and hitherto unknown world, had been opened to the minds of Europeans, by the impulse of the Crusades. It cannot be doubted, that this was one of the most powerful causes, of the development and freedom of mind, which was exhibited after this great event.

Another circumstance is worthy of notice. Until the time of the Crusades, the court of Rome, the centre of the Church, had only communicated with the laity through the medium of ecclesiastics; either through legates sent by the Church of Rome, or through the body of the bishops and

clergy. A small proportion of the laity were in direct relation with Rome. But it was generally through ecclesiastics that Rome communicated with the people. During the period of the Crusades, however, Rome was visited by a great number of the Crusaders, who passed through it either in going or returning. A multitude of the laity were witnesses of the policy, and conduct, of the Roman court, and ascertained what share personal interests had in religious contests. There cannot be a doubt, that this knowledge inspired many minds with a boldness hitherto unknown.

When we consider the general state of the human mind at the close of the Crusades, and especially in ecclesiastical affairs, it is impossible not to be struck by a singular fact:—religious ideas had undergone no change, they had not been replaced by contrary, or even dissimilar opinions; but the mind was infinitely more free; religious belief was no longer the only sphere in which the human intellect was exercised. Although not disregarded, religion lost its exclusive power;—the mind was employed on other subjects. Thus, at the close of the thirteenth century, the moral cause which produced the Crusades, or at least had been their most energetic principle, had disappeared;—the moral state of Europe had undergone a great modification.

The social state had undergone an analogous change. Much discussion has taken place respecting the influence of the Crusades in this particular; it has been shown that a great number of the proprietors of fiefs who went to the Holy Land, were obliged to sell their fiefs to the king, or to grant charters to the Communes, in order to obtain money. It has been shown, that, solely by their absence, many nobles lost much of their power. Without entering into the details of this inquiry, we may I think sum up, in a few general facts, the influence of the Crusades on the social state.

The Crusades, greatly diminished the number of small fiefs, of small domains, of small proprietors; they served to concentrate property, and power, into the hands of a few. It is after the termination of the Crusades, that we distinguish the rise and growth of great fiefs—of the great feudal powers.

I have often regretted that we have no map of France divided into fiefs, which, like the maps we have divided into departments, arrondissements, cantons, and communes, should designate the different fiefs, their extent, their relations, and their successive changes. If we could compare, by the aid of such a map, the state of France, before, and after the Crusades, we should see how many of the fiefs had disappeared, and

how greatly the large, and considerable fiefs, had increased. This is one of the most important results of the Crusades.

Even in those instances, where small proprietors had been enabled to preserve their fiefs, they did not live so isolated as formerly. The possessors of great fiefs became, as it were, so many centres around which the small proprietors grouped themselves, and near whom they wished to take up their abode. Many of them, during the Crusades, had been obliged to follow the banner of a richer, and more powerful lord, and to receive assistance from him; they had lived with him, partaken his fortunes, and adventures. When the Crusaders returned home, this sociability, this habit of living in intercourse with their superior, continued to subsist. Thus, while we see the great fiefs augmented after the Crusades, we see the proprietors of those fiefs hold a much more considerable court in their castles, and surrounded by a much greater number of gentlemen, who, though they retained their estates, did not exclusively reside on them.

The extension of the great fiefs; and the creation of a certain number of social centres, instead of the isolation which previously existed; were the two most remarkable effects which the Crusades produced on the feudal system.

A fact of the same nature may be recognised in the situation of the burghers. The Crusades

created large Communes. A small commerce, a limited industry, would have been insufficient to create such Communes as the cities of Italy and Flanders were. They were produced by an extensive commerce, a maritime trade, and especially by the traffic between the East and West. The Crusades communicated to maritime commerce the strongest impulse it has ever received.

In fine, when we consider the state of society at the termination of the Crusades, we find that the isolated life, the dispersion of existence and of influence, this movement of universal *localization*—if I may so term it—had ceased, and had been replaced by a movement of a completely contrary nature, a movement of *centralization*. Every thing tended towards unity. Small things were absorbed by greater; or were grouped around them. This is the form society assumed at that epoch, this is the direction in which it advanced.

You now comprehend, gentlemen, why at the close of the thirteenth, and during the fourteenth century, both sovereigns and the people, were averse to renewing the Crusades. They were no longer necessary; no class desired their continuance; they had been produced by the impulse of religious feelings, by the exclusive dominion of religion over all the affairs of life; this dominion had now lost its energy. They had sought in the Crusades for a novel, a more extended and varied

existence; but these desires were now satisfied in Europe, through the progress of social relations. At this period a grand career of political aggrandizement was opened to sovereigns. Why should they take so much trouble to conquer kingdoms in Asia, when so many unsubdued states lay, at their very doors? Philip-Augustus engaged in the Crusades unwillingly. Was it not natural? He wished to make himself king of France. It was the same with the people. The career of wealth was before them; they renounced adventurous exploits for industry. With monarchs adventures were replaced by politics; with the people by great undertakings. One class of society alone still preserved the love of adventure—that portion of the feudal nobility, which, not being in a situation to expect political aggrandizement, and being averse to labour, retained their former position, their former manners. They always engaged in the Crusades, and continually attempted to renew them.

These, gentlemen, are, in my opinion, the great, the real effects of the Crusades: on one hand, extension of ideas, the emancipation of mind; on the other, a more brilliant, and powerful existence, and the enlarged sphere opened to activity. They produced at once a greater degree of political unity, and more personal liberty; they tended to establish the independence of man,

and the centralization of society. Much discussion has arisen respecting the means of civilization, which the Crusades imported into Europe from the East. It has been said, that the greater part of those discoveries, which aided the development of European civilization in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the compass, printing, and gunpowder, were known in the East, and that the Crusaders probably brought them from thence. This is partially true. Some of these assertions may however be contested; but the influence, the general effect, that the Crusades produced, both on the human mind, and on society, are incontrovertible. Europe had been restricted to a very narrow track; they caused her to advance by a new, and much wider path: and through their means, the transformation of the different elements of European society into governments, and people; which is the characteristic of modern civilization, was commenced. About this time also, one of those institutions which have most powerfully contributed to accomplish this great change—Monarchy—became developed. Its history, from the rise of modern states to the thirteenth century, will be the subject of the next Lecture.

LECTURE IX.

GENTLEMEN,

In our last réunion, I endeavoured to explain the essential character of modern society; and wherein it differs from that of primitive Europe. This difference appears to consist in the fact, that all the elements of the social state heretofore so numerous, and diversified, were reduced to two:—the government, on one hand; and the people, on the other. Instead of numerous governing forces—the feudal nobility, the clergy, kings, citizens, *coloni*, and serfs, assuming the chief place in history; two great objects alone occupy the historical theatre in modern Europe: government, and the people.

If this is the fact which European civilization has produced; it is therefore the end to which we should aspire; towards which our researches should be directed. We must trace the rise, the progress, and the gradual development of this

great result. We are now about to consider that period, from whence its origin may be dated. It was, as you already know, between the twelfth, and the sixteenth centuries, that the slow, and secret work, which gradually brought society into this new form, this definite state, was accomplished. We have also studied the history of the first great event, which, in my opinion, powerfully aided in directing Europe into this path:—I mean the Crusades.

About the period which was marked by the Crusades, *Monarchy*,—that institution, which perhaps more than any other has contributed to form modern society; to amalgamate all social elements; and to divide them into two forces; the government, and the people;—began to increase in importance.

It is evident that Monarchy, has performed a most important part in the history of European civilization. The most superficial examination of facts is sufficient to convince us of this. We see the development of Monarchy, and of society in general, advance together;—their progress was simultaneous, at least, during a considerable period. And not only was this the case; but whenever society made any movement towards its modern, and definite character, Monarchy appeared to increase, and prosper; so that, when the work was accomplished; when in almost all the great states of Europe, no important, and de-

cisive influences remained, excepting the public, and the government; Monarchy became the government.

This occurred not only in France, where the fact is evident, but in the greater number of the countries of Europe. Under slightly different forms, and separated by a short interval of time, the history of society in England, Spain, and Germany, affords the same result. In England for instance, it was in the time of the Tudors, that the ancient, peculiar, and local elements of English society, were changed and dissolved, and yielded their place to a system of public authorities; at that period, also, Monarchy was most powerful. It was the same in Germany, in Spain, in all the great European states.

If we turn from Europe, to study the rest of the world, we shall be struck by an analogous fact; we shall every where find Monarchy, occupying an important position, and appearing the most universal, and permanent institution; that which it is most difficult to prevent the establishment of; and which it is a most arduous task to extirpate, where it has once existed.

From time immemorial, it has been prevalent in Asia. When America was discovered, all the great states—however differently constituted—were subjected to the monarchical system. In Africa also, whenever any nation possessing a large extent of territory is met with, the same

system prevails. And not only has Monarchy penetrated every where; but it has accommodated itself to the most opposite situations; to civilization as well as to barbarism; to the most pacific nations, China for example; and to the most warlike, to those where a military spirit predominates. It has been established amidst a system of castes, in societies where the gradations of rank are most rigorously defined; and amidst a system of equality, in societies furthest removed from all legal and permanent classification. Sometimes oppressive, and despotic; sometimes favourable to the progress of civilization, and freedom, it appears like a head that may be placed on many different bodies; a plant that may be produced from many different seeds.

In this fact, gentlemen, we might discover many curious, and important consequences. I will only mention two;—the first is, that it is impossible such a result should be the work of chance, of force, or usurpation alone; it is impossible but that a great, and powerful analogy, must exist between the nature of the institution of Monarchy, and the nature of man; considered either in his individual, or social capacity. Force, doubtless, had some share in the origin of this institution, and certainly contributed much to its progress;—but whenever we discover a result like this; whenever we behold any great event developed, and reproduced, during a long course

of ages, and amidst so many different situations; we ought never to attribute it exclusively to force. Force, performs a great, and constant part in human affairs;—but they do not originate from it,—it is not the moving power. A moral cause superior to force, and the part it performs, exists and governs every thing. In the history of societies, force holds the same place, that the body does in that of man. The body certainly is an important element in the life of man; but it cannot be called the principle of his existence. Life circulates in it, but does not emanate from it. So in human societies;—however important force may be, it is not the ruling power; it does not govern their destinies;—it is the ideas, the moral influences, concealed under the accidental forms that force imposes, which regulate the course of societies. A cause of this nature, not force alone; must have occasioned the predominance of Monarchy.

A second fact, which it is not less necessary to notice, is the flexibility of the institution, the facility with which it can be modified, and adapted, to a multiplicity of different circumstances. Its form is undivided, permanent, and simple; it does not exhibit that prodigious variety of combinations we meet with in other institutions; nevertheless, it accommodates itself to societies which have the least resemblance to each other. It is therefore evident that it admits of great

diversity, and is connected with many different elements, and principles ; both as regards society, and man.

The reason that the part which Monarchy has performed in the history of the world, is so imperfectly comprehended ; and that men have so often mistaken both its nature, and its effects ; is, because they have not studied this institution in its full extent ;—that, on one hand, they have not discovered the true, and unvarying principle, which forms its essence, and continues to subsist, under whatever circumstances it may be placed ; and, on the other, that they have not paid sufficient attention to all the variations it accommodates itself to ; to all the principles with which it enters into alliance :—they have erred, I repeat, from not having considered Monarchy under this vast, and twofold aspect.

This is the work I wish to undertake with you, in order to obtain a complete, and precise knowledge of the effects this institution has produced on modern Europe ; whether those effects were the result of its innate principle ; or of the modifications it has undergone.

It cannot be doubted, that the strength of Monarchy, that the moral power, which in its true principle, does not reside in the peculiar, and personal will of the individual, who for the moment may be king ;—assuredly the people, in accepting Monarchy as an institution ; and philosophers, in

recommending it as a system; did not desire, did not intend to recognise, the sovereignty of the will of an individual; which must necessarily be narrow, arbitrary, capricious, and ignorant.

Monarchy, however, is something totally different from the will of an individual, although it appears under that form. It is the personification of rightful sovereignty (*souveraineté de droit*); of a will which is essentially rational, enlightened, just, and impartial; which is distinct from, and superior to, all individual wills; and which, on that account, has a right to govern them. Such is the opinion that the people form of Monarchy; such is the motive of their adherence to it.

Is it true, gentlemen, that there is such a rightful sovereignty (*souveraineté de droit*)?—is there a will which has a right to govern mankind? It is certain that mankind believe there is—for they seek, they have constantly sought, and they will never refrain from seeking to place themselves under its dominion. Represent to yourselves, I do not say a whole nation, but any, even the smallest assemblage of individuals;—imagine all these individuals subjected to a sovereign, who is only such *de facto*; to a power, which has no right but that of force, and no title recognised by reason, justice, and truth. Human nature revolts from such a supposition;—it will only submit to right. It seeks the rightful sovereignty; which is the only power that man consents to

obey. What is history, but the demonstration of this universal fact? What are the greater number of the contests that agitate the existence of nations; but so many ardent efforts to discover the rightful sovereignty, and to place themselves under its dominion? And not only the people, but philosophers, firmly believe in its existence; and seek it incessantly. What are all the systems of political philosophy, but researches after the rightful sovereignty? What is their object, but to ascertain what power has a right to govern society? Consider every system—theocracy, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—all boast of having discovered to which form of government rightful sovereignty belongs; all promise to place society under the dominion of its legitimate ruler. I repeat it—this is the object of the labours of philosophers; as it is that of all national efforts.

How could both philosophers, and the people, have failed to believe in rightful sovereignty? How could they have failed to seek it continually? Take the most simple supposition;—that it is necessary to accomplish some act; that some influence must be exercised either on society in general, on some of its members, or merely on an individual:—there must evidently be some rule for this action, some legitimate will, which ought to be obeyed, and followed. Whether you penetrate into the most minute details of social life, or rise to the contemplation of great events,—every

where you will find that there is some truth to be discovered, some rational law to be applied to realities. This, then, is the *rightful sovereignty*, towards which both philosophers, and nations, have never ceased, and never can cease to aspire.

How far is it possible to represent this rightful sovereignty in a general, and permanent manner, by a terrestrial power,—by human will? What is there necessarily false, and dangerous, in this supposition? What, in particular, are we to think of the personification of rightful sovereignty under the image of Monarchy? How far, and on what conditions, is this personification admissible? These are momentous questions, which it is not necessary I should discuss here; but which I cannot omit to point out, and respecting which I shall say a few words in passing.

I affirm,—and common sense will also recognise,—that rightful sovereignty, in its fullest, and most enduring sense, cannot belong to any individual; and that to attribute it to any human power whatsoever, is radically false, and dangerous. Thence proceeds the necessity for the limitation of all powers, whatever may be their forms, or denominations;—thence also proceeds the radical illegitimacy of absolute power, whatever may be its origin; whether it be hereditary, elective, or obtained by conquest. Differences may exist, respecting the best means of discovering the rightful sovereignty;—these means change, they

are modified by time and place ;—but at no time, in no place, can any single power be legitimately the independent possessor of this sovereignty.

This principle being laid down, it is not the less certain that Monarchy, under whatever system it is considered, presents itself as the personification of rightful sovereignty. Listen to the theocratic system. It affirms that kings are the image of God on earth ; which means, that they are a personification of sovereign justice, truth, and goodness. Ask the jurisconsults :— they reply, that the king is the actual law ; which is as much as to say, that the king is the impersonation of rightful sovereignty,—of that just law, which has a right to govern society. Ask Monarchy itself,—the system of pure Monarchy ;— it will answer, that it is the personification of the state, of the general interest. In whatever situation you may consider it, with whatever principles it may be allied, you will always find it assuming the claim to represent, and reproduce the rightful sovereignty, which alone, can legitimately govern society.

We need not feel surprised at this. What are the characteristics of rightful sovereignty, the characteristics which are derived from its peculiar nature ? In the first place, it is undivided :— there is only one truth, one justice ; and, consequently, only one rightful sovereignty. It is, moreover, permanent, and unchangeable — for

truth cannot alter. It is placed in an exalted situation, it is elevated above the vicissitudes, and the chances, of the world;—it is, as it were, a mere spectator of the world, and its judge. Monarchy, outwardly exhibits the rational, and natural characteristics, of rightly sovereignty, under the most positive form ; and presents the most faithful image of them. Read the work of M. Benjamin Constant, where he has so ingeniously represented Monarchy, as a neutral and moderating power ; raised above the accidents, and the conflicts of society ; and only interfering in grand crises. Is not this the position, we might imagine rightful sovereignty would assume, in the government of human affairs ? There must be something in this idea which strongly impresses the mind, for it has passed with singular rapidity, from books to facts. A sovereign made it the basis of his throne, in the constitution of Brazil. Monarchy, in that constitution is represented as a moderating power ; elevated above the executive powers, —their witness, and judge.

Under whatever point of view you consider this institution, you will find it bears a very considerable outward resemblance to rightful sovereignty ; and that it is not surprising, that this resemblance should have struck mankind. Therefore, whenever the reflection, or imagination of men, has been led to contemplate, and study the nature, and essential characteristics of rightful

sovereignty; it has turned towards Monarchy. Thus, during the period when religious ideas were predominant; the habitual contemplation of the nature of God, impelled mankind towards the monarchical system. At another epoch, when jurisconsults influenced society; the habit of studying under the name of law, the nature of rightful sovereignty, was favourable to the dogma, of its impersonation in Monarchy. The human mind, after an attentive consideration of the nature, and qualities, of rightful sovereignty,—when no opposing causes have intervened,—has always attached force, and credit, to the pretensions of Monarchy, which appeared a faithful image of it.

Some periods occur, more especially calculated to identify Monarchy, with the rightful sovereignty—those periods, when individual forces are developed with all their uncertainty, and caprice; when selfishness rules mankind, either through ignorance, and brutality; or through corruption. At such a time, society, abandoned to the conflict of personal wills; and not being able, by means of their free concurrence, to unite them all, under one general and common will, to which all should adhere, and be subjected; ardently seeks some power, which may compel the submission of all individuals;—and so soon as any institution appears, which bears any of the characteristics of rightful sovereignty, and which is willing to rule

over society ; society rallies round it with intense eagerness, as proscripts take refuge in the asylum of a church. This is what we observe in the youthful, and unorganized state of nations, such as we have lately considered. Monarchy, is most suitable to these periods of anarchy, which, if we may so express it, are so powerful, and fruitful, when society struggles to form and regularize itself, but which it is unable to accomplish by the free concurrence of individual wills. There are other periods, when, from an opposite cause, its merits are equally obvious. What caused the Roman world, which at the close of the republic appeared so near its dissolution, to subsist for nearly fifteen centuries, under the name of that Empire, which, after all, was but a long decay, a protracted agony ? Monarchy alone, could have produced such an effect—that alone, could have preserved a society, which selfishness continually tended to destroy. The imperial power, contended for fifteen centuries, against the decay of the Roman world.

Thus we find, there are periods, in which Monarchy alone can retard the dissolution of society ; and periods also, in which that power alone is capable of accelerating its formation. And in both cases, it is because Monarchy, more than any other institution, clearly and powerfully represents the rightful sovereignty, that it exercises this power over events.

Under whatever point of view, gentlemen, you consider this institution, at whatever epoch, you study it; you will admit that its essential character, its moral principle, its true, and occult signification, the origin of its power consists (I repeat) in being the image, the impersonation, the presumed interpreter, of that undivided that superior, that essentially legitimate will, which alone has a right to govern society.

Let us now consider Monarchy, under the second point of view;—that is to say, in its flexibility, in the variety of parts it has performed, and the different effects it has produced. We must inquire what is the nature of this flexibility; and determine the causes that produced it.

We have here a great advantage. We can at once enter on historical ground, on the history of our own country. By the concurrence of extraordinary circumstances, it has occurred that in modern Europe, Monarchy has assumed all the different forms under which it has ever appeared in the history of the world. If I may be permitted to use the expression: European Monarchy has been, as it were, the product of every possible form of Monarchy. I shall give an outline of its history, from the fifth to the twelfth century; you will then perceive under how many different aspects it has presented itself, and how deeply it is impressed with that varied,

complicated, and agitated character, which distinguishes European civilization.

In the fifth century, at the epoch of the Germanic invasion, Monarchy appeared under two forms, the barbarian, and the imperial;—the Monarchy of Clovis, and that of Constantine;—differing from each other both in principles and effects.

Barbarian Monarchy, is essentially elective;—the Germanic kings were elected, though not exactly with the forms, we are accustomed to attach to the idea of election. They were military chiefs; obliged to cause their authority to be freely accepted, by a great number of their companions; who obeyed them as the bravest, and the most competent. Election, is the true source of barbarian monarchy; its essential, and primitive character.

I do not mean to assert, that this character in the fifth century, had not become somewhat modified, and that different elements had not been introduced into Monarchy. The various tribes had been governed by their own chiefs, for a length of time; some families had become more distinguished, more considerable, and richer, than others. This was the commencement of hereditary succession; the chief was rarely elected but from certain families. This was the first principle, which modified the dominant principle of election.

Another idea, another element, had at that

period been infused into the character of barbarian Monarchy;—this element, was religion. Many of the barbarian nations, for instance the Goths, entertained a conviction, that the families of their kings descended from those of their gods, or of the heroes who had been deified—amongst others of Odin. Homer, in like manner, represents the kings he celebrates to be the descendants of gods, or of demi-gods; and on that account, the objects of a sort of religious adoration, notwithstanding their limited power.

Such was barbarian Monarchy, in the fifth century—it had already become diversified, and unsettled, although its fundamental principle was still predominant.

The imperial Roman Monarchy, was very different—it was the impersonation of the state; the inheritor of the majesty, and sovereignty of the Roman people. Consider the Monarchy of Augustus, and of Tiberius;—the emperor is the representative of the senate, of the *comitii*, of the entire republic. Monarchy succeeded the Republic, which reappeared under the form of the Empire. Every one must recognise this fact in the modest language of the first emperors,—of those amongst them at least, who possessed some degree of intelligence, and understood their situation. They felt they were in the presence of the people who had so lately been sovereigns, and who had abdicated in their favour; they spoke as

the representatives of the people, as their ministers. But in effect, they possessed all the power which had formerly belonged to the people, and exercised it with fearfully augmented force. We cannot, gentlemen, have any difficulty in comprehending this transformation; for we have ourselves participated in one of a similar nature. We have seen the sovereign power, transferred from the people to an individual—this is the history of *Napoleon*. Napoleon was an impersonation of the sovereign people. He constantly admitted it. He used to say, “Who was ever like me, elected by eighteen millions of men? Who can so justly be termed the representative of the people?” His coins have on one side the inscription “*République Française*,” and on the reverse, “*Napoléon Empereur*.” Does this not prove the fact I have asserted, that in him, the people was crowned?

Such, gentlemen, was the fundamental character of imperial Monarchy; this character was preserved during the three first centuries of the empire; it only assumed its perfect, and definite form, under Diocletian. But at that very moment, it was about to undergo a great change;—a new form of Monarchy was on the point of appearing. Christianity, had laboured for three centuries, to introduce a religious element, into the imperial power. In the reign of Constantine, it succeeded, not in rendering that element

supreme, but in assigning to it an important part. Monarchy, here presents itself under a very different character;—its origin is not of this world; the prince, is no longer the representative of the sovereignty of the people, he is the image, the representative, the delegate of God. Power is committed to him from Heaven; while under the imperial Monarchy, he derived it from the people. The two situations, were very different; so were their results. It is difficult to combine the rights of liberty, and political guarantees, with the principle of religious monarchy—but the principle itself, is noble, moral, and salutary. The following is the idea that was formed of the sovereign, under the system of religious Monarchy in the seventh century. It is extracted from the Canons of the Council of Toledo.

“ The king, derives his name (*rex*) from the justice of his government (*rectè*.) If he governs with justice (*rectè*), he is legitimately entitled to the name of king, if he governs unjustly, he disgracefully loses it. Our fathers said truly, *rex ejus eris si recta facis; si autem non facis, non eris*. The two grand virtues of royalty are justice, and truth (the science of truth, and reason).

The royal power, is bound as well as the people, to pay respect to the laws. Obeying the will of Heaven we institute, both for ourselves, and for our subjects, wise laws; which ourselves, and our suc-

cessors, are bound to obey, together with the entire population of our kingdom.

God, the creator of all things; in planning the structure of the human body, made the head, its highest part; and ordained that from thence all the nerves of the body should proceed. He placed in the head, the light of the eyes, to the end that every thing hurtful might be discovered through them. There also, he fixed the powers of the intellect; and commanded it to govern all the other members, and to regulate their actions wisely It is therefore proper, in the first place, to provide laws for all that concerns the prince; to have his safety attended to, his life protected; and afterwards to consider those things which affect the people; so, that in securing (as is proper) the safety of the king, that of the people, may be as well, if not more effectually guaranteed.”*

But into the system of religious Monarchy, another element, nearly as powerful as Monarchy itself, was almost invariably introduced. A new power, was placed beside Monarchy, a power more nearly allied to the Divinity—the source from whence Monarchy emanates—than that power itself. This power was the authority of the clergy, of the ecclesiastical body, which interposed itself, between God and princes; between princes and the people; in such a manner, that Monarchy, the image of the Divine government, incurred the

* Forum Judicium; tit. 1, l. 2, tit. 1, l. 2, l. 4.

risk, of becoming merely an instrument in the hands of the human interpreters of the divine will. This cause created fresh diversities in the destiny, and in the effects of the institution.

In the fifth century, there existed in Europe, three different forms of Monarchy, which had all been founded on the ruins of the Roman Empire;—Barbarian Monarchy, Imperial Monarchy, and the scarcely established Religious Monarchy. Their destinies were as varied as their principles.

In France, under the monarchs of the first race, Barbarian Monarchy prevailed. The clergy, made some attempts to impress on it either the imperial, or the religious character;—but with some modifications caused by occasional hereditary succession, and religious ideas, the principle of election, restricted to the royal family, continued in full vigour.

In Italy, amongst the Ostrogoths, Imperial Monarchy, triumphed over the customs of the Barbarians. Theodoric, claimed to be the successor of the emperors. If we read Cassiodorus, we shall be satisfied that this was the character of his government.

In Spain, Monarchy assumed a more religious character than elsewhere—the Councils of Toledo, being I do not say, the supreme, but the most influential power; a religious character, predominated, if not in the actual government of the Visigothic kings; at least, in the laws which

the clergy dictated to them, and the language they made them use.

In England, in the Saxon times, the manners of the people, were almost entirely barbarous. The kingdoms of the heptarchy, are little more than the territories of different tribes, each of which had its chief. Military election, was more prevalent there than in any other country. The Monarchy of the Anglo-Saxons, is the most faithful type of Barbarian Monarchy.

Thus, from the fifth to the seventh century, although in considering general facts, we distinguish three forms of Monarchy, yet one of these forms, always prevailed exclusively, according to circumstances, in the different states of Europe.

The European world was at that epoch, in such a state of chaos, that it was impossible to establish any general or permanent system ; and from one vicissitude to another, we arrive at the eighth century, without being able to discover that Monarchy has any where acquired a definite character.

Towards the middle of the eighth century,—coeval with the triumph of a second race of Frank kings,—events began to assume a more general character ; they became more distinct, their sphere being extended, they were more easily understood, and their results were greater. We shall presently see the various forms of Monarchy

succeeding, and entering into striking combinations with each other.

When the Carlovignians replaced the Merovignians; the barbarian monarchy appeared to recommence. Election was again resorted to. Pepin was elected at Soissons. When the first kings of the Carlovignian race gave kingdoms to their sons; they took the precaution of having them acknowledged by the great lords of the states they were appointed to rule;—whenever a division of the kingdom was in contemplation, they desired it should be sanctioned, by the national assemblies. In a word, the elective principle, under the name of popular acceptance, acquired once more some reality. You will recollect, that this change of dynasty, was in effect a new incursion of the Germans into the West of Europe; and that they brought back with them a shadow of their ancient institutions, of their former manners.

About the same period we distinguish the religious principle introducing itself still more distinctly into Monarchy, and performing a more important part. Pepin was recognised and consecrated by the pope—his power required a religious sanction. Religion had already attained great weight—he sought its aid. Charlemagne took the same precaution, and the system of religious Monarchy was gradually developed. Religion, however, was not the prevailing characteristic of the government of Charlemagne, it

was not its most prominent feature,—the imperial sovereignty was evidently that which he attempted to revive. Although strictly allied with the clergy, he used them as his instruments; he was not their tool. The favourite idea, the object of the ambition of Charlemagne, was to found a great empire, to reduce local interests to a grand political unity, and to revive the Roman Empire.

He died, and Louis-le-Débonnaire succeeded him. Every one knows under what form the royal power appeared at that time. The king fell into the hands of the clergy; who censured, deposed, reinstated, and governed him—the system of religious monarchy, subordinate to the priesthood, appeared on the point of being established.

Thus, from the middle of the eighth, to the middle of the ninth century, the difference between the three forms of Monarchy, was manifested in grand, closely connected, and obvious events.

After the death of Louis-le-Débonnaire, Europe fell into a state of anarchy, and the three forms of Monarchy almost equally disappeared,—every thing was confounded. After the expiration of a certain time, when the feudal system had become established; a fourth form of Monarchy appeared, differing from every other that had hitherto been known. I mean the feudal Monarchy. This form of Monarchy is of a very confused nature—it is very difficult to define.

It has been said, that the king, in the feudal system, was the suzerain of all other suzerains; the lord of all other lords; that he was connected by indissoluble links, by a succession of steps, with the whole of society;—and that when he called around him all his vassals, who, in their turn, summoned their vassals, and so on to the lowest rank in society: the king in fact, called all his subjects together, and showed he possessed a real sovereignty. I do not deny that this is the theory of feudal Monarchy; but it is a pure theory, which never governed facts. The general influence which the king exercised by means of an hierarchical organization, the links which united Monarchy to the entire feudal society, never existed but in the dreams of civilians. In fact, the greater number of the feudal lords, were at that period completely independent of the sovereign, a great number of them had scarcely heard the name of Monarchy, and had few, if any, relations with it. Every sovereignty, was local and independent. The title of king, borne by one of the feudal lords, expresses less a fact, than a remembrance.

This was the condition of Monarchy, in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In the twelfth, with the reign of Louis-le-Gros, the aspect of affairs began to change. The sovereign was more considered, his influence was felt where it had previously been unable to penetrate, he performed a more

active part in society. If we inquire by what title, we shall not discover that the king, at that period possessed any of the titles, in right of which Monarchy, had hitherto prevailed. He was not the heir of the Roman Emperors; it was not therefore as their successor, that his power became augmented, and acquired a greater degree of consistency. Neither was it by virtue of election, or as being an emanation from the Divine power. Election had disappeared, the hereditary principle had at length definitively prevailed; and though religion sanctioned the accession of kings, the popular mind was by no means impressed with the idea of a religious government in the system of Monarchy under Louis-le-Gros. An element, hitherto unknown then appeared; Monarchy assumed a new character—a new system of Monarchy commenced.

It is unnecessary to repeat that society was at that epoch, in a state of extreme disorder; a prey to continual violence. Society had no means of struggling against this deplorable state, or of recovering either order or unity. The feudal institutions, the baronial parliaments, the seigneurial courts; all the forms, under which, in modern times, feudality has been represented as a regularized and well ordered system; were destitute of power, or reality. They were incapable of re-establishing any degree of order, and justice;—so that, in the midst of social desolation, no one

knew where to apply ; to whom to appeal, for the reparation of injustice, the redress of evils, and the reconstitution of the state. The name of king remained :—it was borne by some one of the lords :—a few individuals addressed themselves to him. The different titles under which Monarchy had hitherto presented itself, although they did not exercise much influence, were recollected by many, and were had recourse to on some occasions. It sometimes happened, that the king was called on to punish a scandalous outrage, to re-establish order in the vicinity of the royal residence ; or to terminate a quarrel of long standing :—he was therefore, on such occasions, required to interfere in affairs which did not personally concern himself ; he interfered as the protector of public order, the arbiter of, and redresser of wrongs. The moral authority, which was still attached to the title of king, obtained for him gradually an extension of this power.

This is the character that Monarchy began to assume, in the reign of Louis-le-Gros, and under the administration of Suger. For the first time, though indistinct, feeble, and confused ; the idea of a public power, presented itself to the popular mind—of a power, superior to the local powers of society ; called upon to render justice to those who were unable to obtain it by ordinary means ; capable of restoring order, or at least of

commanding it,—the idea of a supreme magistracy whose essential character was to maintain or re-establish peace, to protect the weak, to give judgment in those quarrels, which could not be terminated by ordinary means. This is the novel character, under which, at the close of the twelfth century, Monarchy in Europe, and especially in France, began to appear. It was not a barbarian, it was not a religious, it was not an imperial Monarchy,—its power was limited, imperfect, and accidental—it was the power, as it were, for I know not any more fitting term, of a supreme magistrate, or justice of the peace.

This is the true origin of modern Monarchy, this is what may be termed its vital principle,—that which became still further developed in the course of its career, and which I do not hesitate to say, has ensured its success. At various periods in history, the different characters,—the different systems of Monarchy I have described, have reappeared, and by turns, have endeavoured to regain the preponderance. Thus, the clergy have always preached the restoration of a religious Monarchy; the jurisconsults have laboured to revive the imperial Monarchy; the nobility would have desired to renew the feudal, or the elective Monarchy. And not only have the clergy, the jurisconsults, and the nobility, endeavoured to impress a certain character on the Monarchical government; but Monarchy itself,

has turned them all to account, and caused them to contribute towards its aggrandizement. Kings, have sometimes represented themselves, as the delegates of God ; sometimes as the successors of the emperors ; sometimes as the highest members of the nobility, according to the caprice or necessity of the moment. They have illegitimately availed themselves of all these different titles—but not one of them is the true title of modern sovereignty, the source of its preponderating influence. It is, I repeat, as the depository, and protector of public order, of universal justice, and of the general interest ;—it is under the form of a supreme magistracy, the centre, and the bond of society, that Monarchy has in modern times presented itself to the eyes of the people, and has been able to succeed in appropriating their resources to its own use by obtaining their adherence.

You will distinguish as we advance, this character of modern European sovereignty—which as I before stated, commences with the reign of Louis-le-Gros —acquiring strength, becoming gradually developed ; until at last it formed, as it were, its political physiognomy. It is through this means that Monarchy, has aided in accomplishing that grand result, which now characterizes European society ; the reduction of all social elements to two—the government and the people.

You therefore perceive, gentlemen, that at the breaking out of the Crusades, Europe had already entered on the path which led to her present state—you have already seen Monarchy assume the position it held during the great transformation. In our next réunion we shall study the different attempts at political organization, which were made from the twelfth to the sixteenth century ; with a view to sustain by means of institutions, an order of things on the point of expiring. We shall consider the efforts of the feudal system, of the Church, and even of the communes, to constitute society in accordance with their ancient principles, their primitive forms ; and thus to defend themselves from the general change that was in preparation.

LECTURE X.

GENTLEMEN,

Before I commence this lecture, I wish precisely to determine its object.

You will recollect that one of the first facts which we noticed, was the diversity, the separation, and the independence of all the elements of European society in its primitive state. The feudal nobility, the clergy, the communes, bore no resemblance to each other, either in situation, laws, or manners ;—they were so many totally distinct societies, each governed by its own laws, each supported by its own resources. Some relations existed between them, they sometimes came into contact, but they were never really united ;—they did not, correctly speaking, form one nation, one state.

At length, all these separate societies became amalgamated, and their union, as you have before had occasion to remark, is the distinctive

fact, the essential characteristic of modern society. The former social elements were all reduced to two—government, and the people; the diversity ceased, and union was the consequence of resemblance. But before this result was effected, and even with a view to prevent its accomplishment, many efforts were made to unite these separate societies, so far as their common interests were concerned, and to make them act in concert, without destroying their independence, or the differences that existed between them. The situation, the privileges, the peculiar nature of each, were to be but little affected; yet it was desired to reconcile them, to form them into an undivided state, a single nation—to bring them all under one, and the same government. All these attempts were unsuccessful. The result, I have before named,—the unity of modern society—attests their ill success. Even in those countries of Europe, where some remains of the former diversity of the social elements are yet visible; in Germany for instance, where a genuine feudal nobility, a real burgher class, still exists; in England, where a national church is in possession of exclusive revenues, and exercises a peculiar jurisdiction; it is yet evident that this reputed separate existence, is only a shadow, a delusive appearance; that these special societies are incorporated with the general society, absorbed in the state, governed by the public authority, subjected

to the common system, and compelled to follow the current of ideas, and manners. I repeat it, even where the separation, and independence of the former elements of society subsists in form, it no longer possesses any reality.

The attempts to co-ordain, without transforming them;—the endeavours to concentrate all these elements into one grand national whole, without destroying their diversity; have however held an important place in the history of modern Europe; they occupy a considerable space in that of the epoch we are considering—that epoch which separates the positive condition of Europe from its modern state, and during which the metamorphosis of European society was accomplished. And not only do they hold an important place in history, but they have exercised a very great influence on subsequent events; especially on the mode by which all social elements were reduced to two—the government and the public. It is therefore necessary we should thoroughly comprehend the nature of all the attempts at political organization, which were made from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, for the purpose of creating nations and governments, without destroying the diversity of the secondary societies which existed contiguous to each other. This, gentlemen, is the subject I propose to treat of in the present lecture.

Our labours to-day, will be wearisome—even

discouraging. These attempts at organization were certainly not all conceived and directed with a view to improvement ; many owed their origin solely to tyranny, and selfishness. Some of them however were pure, and disinterested ; their real object was the social and moral benefit of mankind. The unconnected, violent, and iniquitous state of society, disgusted men of enlarged and enlightened minds ; and they unremittingly sought to discover some means of escaping from such a condition. But even the best of these noble endeavours miscarried :—so much courage, so many sacrifices, so many efforts, so grand a display of virtues were all unavailing. Is this not a mournful spectacle ? Yet another presents itself still more distressing, still more discouraging :—for not only did all these attempts to organize society fail, but they were the means of introducing into it an enormous mass of error, and evil. Notwithstanding the excellence of their intention, the greater number of them were absurd—they attest a profound ignorance of reason, justice, the rights of humanity, and the conditions of the social state ;—so that not only did they fail of success, but they merited the fate they experienced. We have here a picture, not only of the melancholy destiny of mankind, but also of their weakness. We see that it is possible that the smallest fraction of truth, may so entirely engross even the most intelligent

minds, that they totally forget to look further, and cannot distinguish any object that is beyond their low horizon ;—it is sufficient for them, that a slight measure of justice, has been introduced into any measure ; and they entirely lose sight of all the iniquity it is associated with, and permits. This exposure of the vices, and imperfection of mankind, is in my opinion a still more melancholy spectacle, than the miserable condition of their outward life ;—their faults distress me much more than their sufferings. The attempts which we are about to consider will present to us a picture both of the faults and sufferings of humanity. In contemplating them, we must not cease to be just towards those periods, those persons, which have so often erred, whose labours have so repeatedly been fruitless,—for they displayed great virtues, they made grand efforts, and merited much honour.

The attempts at political organization, undertaken from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, were of two kinds. One, had in view the predominance of some one of the elements of society—the clergy, the feudal nobility, or the communes,—to render all the others, subordinate to that one element, and thus to restore unity. The other, proposed to reconcile all the separate societies ; to induce them to act together, but to leave them all perfectly free, and to assign to each a determinate portion of influence.

Attempts of the first kind are much more open to the suspicion of selfishness and tyranny, than those of the second. They have, in fact, been frequently tainted with both these vices;—their very nature renders their mode of operation tyrannical. Some of them nevertheless may have been, in fact were,—suggested by a pure desire to benefit humanity, and advance its progress.

The first of these attempts which attracts our attention, is the attempt at theocratic organization—that is to say, the design of subjecting all the various social forms, to the principles and the dominion of the ecclesiastical society.

You will recollect, gentlemen, what I lately said respecting the History of the Church. I endeavoured to show what principles had become developed in its constitution; what was the degree of legitimacy possessed by each; how they had arisen from the natural course of events; what services they had rendered; what evils they had caused. I have described the different states of the Church, from the eighth to the twelfth century: I have shown it to you as an Imperial Church, as a Barbarian Church, as a Feudal Church, and finally, as a Theocratic Church. I presume that you still retain a recollection of these distinctions; and I shall now therefore endeavour to point out to you what efforts were made by the clergy to obtain the pre-eminence in Europe, and why they were unsuccessful.

An attempt to organize society on theocratic principles was very early made, both by the court of Rome, and by the great body of the clergy ; —it was a natural result of the moral and political superiority of the Church, but it encountered obstacles from its commencement, which it was unable to overcome, even at the period of its greatest vigour. The first of these obstacles, was the nature of Christianity. Very different from almost every other form of religious belief ; Christianity had become established by persuasion alone ; by simple moral means ; it did not owe its origin to force ; in the first ages of its existence it conquered by preaching, by words alone, its victories were over the soul. Moreover, in subsequent ages, after its triumph was complete, after it had acquired riches, and consideration, the Church was never intrusted with the direct government of society. Its purely moral origin, its power, which solely consisted in influence, was impressed upon its condition. It had much influence, but no power. It had insinuated itself into the municipal magistracies ; it powerfully influenced the emperors, and their agents ; but the Church cannot be said to have had any part in the positive administration of public affairs, in the actual government. Now it is evident, gentlemen, that any system of government,—theocracy amongst others,—cannot be established by indirect means, by simple influence. A government, must admi-

nister justice, enforce the laws, command the forces, receive the taxes, dispose of the revenues—in fact govern and take possession of society. It is possible by means of persuasion, to acquire much influence over both a people and their government, but that does not constitute a government, does not found a system, or influence the future. This is the situation in which the Christian Church has been placed by its origin : it has always marched by the side of the government, but it never superseded, or replaced it. This general obstacle ; the attempt at theocratic organization was never able to surmount.

A second obstacle soon presented itself. When the Roman Empire was destroyed, and the barbarian kingdoms were founded, Christianity was the religion of the vanquished. The first object of the Church, was therefore to escape from this subordinate condition : it therefore endeavoured to convert the conquerors, in order to raise itself to a level with them. When this work was accomplished, when the Church aspired to govern the world, it had to encounter the pride, and opposition of the feudal nobility. This, gentlemen, is one of the services that the feudal laity, rendered to Europe. In the eleventh century, the people were almost entirely subjected to the Church. Monarchs were scarcely able to defend themselves against it : the feudal nobility alone, never submitted to the yoke of the clergy, never

humbled themselves before them. It is only necessary for us to recollect the general features of the middle ages, to be struck with the singular mixture of pride, and submission ; of blind credence, and freedom of mind ; in the intercourse of the lords with the priests. We here find some traces of their primitive conditions. You will recollect the sketch I drew of the origin of feudality, of its primitive elements, and the manner in which the elementary feudal society, was formed around the habitation of the possessor of the fief. I remarked, how much inferior the condition of the priest, was to that of the lord. A remembrance, an idea of this difference always existed in the minds of the feudal nobility ; they always considered themselves not only independent of the Church, but superior to it—the only social power competent to govern society, and exercise supremacy over it. They desired to live on good terms with the clergy, and they did so by leaving all spiritual concerns in their hands, and not permitting their interference in temporal affairs. During many centuries, the lay aristocracy, maintained the independence of general society with regard to the Church ; and proudly defended themselves against clerical encroachments, when both kings, and the people were subdued. They were the first to resist, and they contributed, more perhaps than any other power, to prevent the theocratic organization of society.

A third obstacle, which has been but little regarded, and the effects of which have been frequently misjudged; equally opposed this organization.

Whenever a priesthood has become predominant—has been able to subjugate society to a theocratic organization; it has permitted marriage to its members. The body of priests, has been continually recruited from the bosom of its own society;—their children being destined from their birth to fill the same situation, were educated in accordance with that design. Examine all history—the history of Asia, and that of Egypt; you will find that all the great theocratic systems have been the work of a clergy, in themselves a complete society, which required no external aid, and borrowed nothing from the world beyond it.

By the celibacy of the priests, the Christian clergy have been placed in a very different situation. They have ever been obliged to have recourse to the laity in order to recruit their body—to seek at a distance, in different professions, in all social conditions, for the means of duration. It was in vain that the *esprit de corps*, laboured afterwards to assimilate these foreign elements,—something of their origin always subsisted in those who had been newly introduced into the society;—both citizens, and nobles, retained some trace of their former feelings, of their previous condition. Without doubt celibacy, in placing the Catholic

clergy, in a peculiar situation, as strangers to the ordinary life, and interests of mankind, was a powerful cause of their isolation; but it also forced them constantly to have intercourse with the laity, in order to recruit, and renew their body from that source. They consequently participated in many of the moral revolutions, which were accomplished in civil life; and I do not hesitate to assert that the continually recurring necessity of secular intercourse, was more hurtful to the success of the attempt to establish a theocracy, than the *esprit de corps*, maintained by the celibacy of the clergy, was profitable to it.

The clergy finally met with powerful adversaries to their attempts, amongst their own body. The unity of the Church has been much spoken of;—it is true the Church always aspired to attain this unity, and even succeeded in some instances. But do not let us be deceived by imposing expressions, by partial facts. What society has experienced more civil dissensions—what society has been more frequently dismembered than the Church? What class has ever been more divided, more agitated, subject to more frequent vicissitudes, than the ecclesiastical class? The National Churches, in almost every country in Europe, were continually at war with the court of Rome; councils contended against the pope; heresies were innumerable, and incessantly reappearing; schism was continually at the door;—never had so great a diversity of opinions, so much

bitterness in the conflict, so minute a division of power been known. The internal condition of the Church, the divisions of which it afforded a spectacle, the revolutions that agitated it; were perhaps the greatest of all obstacles to the triumph of the theocratic organization, it attempted to impose on society.

All these obstacles, gentlemen, were already in force, were already discernible, in the fifth century; at the commencement of the great attempt which we are now considering. They did not however prevent it from continuing its course, and even from progressing during several centuries. Its most glorious moment, its *crisis* (if we may so call it), was the reign of Gregory VII., at the close of the eleventh century. You have already seen that the predominant idea of Gregory VII., was to subject the world to the clergy; the clergy to the papacy; and Europe to a vast and regularized theocracy. In the prosecution of this design—so far as it is possible to judge after so long a period has elapsed—this extraordinary man, committed in my opinion two great faults, one as a theorist, the other as a revolutionist. His first fault was in proclaiming his plan too ostentatiously, in systematically parading his principles relative to the nature, and rights of spiritual power; and deducing from them by anticipation, like an intractable logician, their most remote consequences. He in consequence menaced, and attacked, all the temporal

sovereignties of Europe, before he had secured the means of subduing them. Success in human affairs, is not obtained by such absolute proceedings, nor by philosophical arguments. Gregory VII. fell into the common error of all revolutionists—that of attempting more than they are capable of executing; of not proportioning, and limiting their efforts by what is practicable. In order to accelerate the triumph of his opinions, he engaged in a contest against the empire, against all temporal sovereigns, and even against the clergy. He did not shrink from any consequence, he did not consult any particular interests, but boldly proclaimed that his design was to govern all kingdoms, as well as all minds. He thus raised up against himself, on one hand the temporal sovereigns who saw they were menaced with an imminent danger; and on the other the philosophical liberals (*libres penseurs*); who had already begun to show themselves, and dreaded a tyrannical expression of opinion. Taking every thing into consideration, Gregory VII. compromised perhaps, more than he advanced, the cause to which he was devoted.

This cause however continued to prosper during the whole course of the twelfth, and until the middle of the thirteenth century. That was the period of the greatest power and splendour of the Church. Yet I do not think that during this

period, her progress was considerable. Until the close of the reign of Innocent III., her success resembled more a series of exploits, than a real extension of power. It was precisely at the moment of her greatest apparent success, that a reaction of popular feeling, declared war against her in a considerable portion of Europe. In the south of France, the heresy of the Albigenses appeared, and was embraced by a numerous, and powerful society. About the same period, ideas, and desires, of a similar nature were manifested in the north—in Flanders. A short time subsequent, Wicliffe in England, employed his abilities in attacking the power of the Church; and founded a sect which has never been extinguished. Monarchs, did not long delay to follow in the popular track. About the commencement of the thirteenth century, the most powerful, and talented sovereigns of Europe—the emperors of the house of Hohenstaufen, had fallen in their conflict with the papacy. During the same century, St. Louis, the most devout of monarchs, proclaimed the independence of temporal power, and published the first pragmatic sanction, which was the foundation of all the others. The opening of the fourteenth century, was marked by the quarrel of Philippe-le-Bel, with Boniface VIII. Edward I. of England, did not show himself at all more docile towards Rome. At this epoch, it is evident that the attempt at theocratic orga-

nization had failed ;—the Church from thenceforward was obliged to act on the defensive, she no longer endeavoured to impose her system on Europe, her only aim was to retain what she had already acquired. The emancipation of European temporal society, may be dated from the close of the thirteenth century—the Church from that period abandoned her pretended claims to possess it.

For some time she had renounced those pretensions even in that sphere, where it might have been imagined the best prospect of success existed. For some time previously in the centre of Italy—in the immediate vicinity of the papal throne, theocracy had completely failed—it had been obliged to yield to a very different system, to that democratic organization, of which the Italian Republics are the type, and the career of which was so splendid from the eleventh to the sixteenth century. You will remember, gentlemen, what I lately stated, respecting the history of the Communes, and the manner in which they were formed. Their destiny in Italy, had been more precocious, and powerful, than in any other part of Europe. The Italian towns were more numerous ; richer, and more powerful, than those of Gaul, England, and Spain ;—the Roman municipal system continued to exist there, in a more animated and regular manner. The provinces of Italy moreover, were much less fitted

than the rest of Europe, to become the habitation of the new conquerors. The lands had every where been cleared, drained, and cultivated ; they contained no forests ; the Barbarians therefore were unable to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, or to live as they had been accustomed to do in the wilds of Germany. Besides, a portion of this territory was still unsubdued. The south of Italy, the *Campagna di Roma*, and Ravenna, still remained dependencies of the Greek empire. Favoured by the distance of the sovereign power, and the vicissitudes of war ; the republican system became established, and was very early developed in that part of the country. And not only was Italy never entirely subjected to the Barbarians ; but even those Barbarians who had conquered it, did not continue to possess it tranquilly or permanently. The Ostrogoths, were routed and expelled by Belisarius, and Narses. The kingdom of the Lombards, did not become more firmly established. It was destroyed by the Franks, and, without extirpating the Lombard population, Pepin, and Charlemagne, deemed it more politic to ally themselves with the ancient Italian population, in order to contend against the Lombards, who had so recently been conquered. The Barbarians therefore, were not in Italy as they were every where else ; the exclusive and undisturbed lords of the territory, and of society.

This was the reason why on that side of the Alps, feudality, never succeeded in establishing itself to any extent; its members were few in number, and much dispersed. The preponderance in society, instead of being transferred to the inhabitants of the country—as in Gaul for example—continued to rest with the towns. When this result became evident, a great number of the possessors of fiefs, either from choice or necessity, ceased to inhabit the country, and went to settle in the cities. The barbarian nobility, became citizens. You may readily conceive, what an accession of power, this single fact conferred on the Italian towns; how great a superiority they acquired over the other communes of Europe. One principal fact which we remarked in the history of those communes, was the inferiority and timidity of their population. The burghers appear to us like brave freedmen, who incessantly struggled against a master always at their gates. The condition of the Italian citizens was very different;—the victorious and the vanquished populations, became intermingled within the same walls. The towns were not compelled to defend themselves against a neighbouring tyrant; they were for the most part inhabited by citizens who had always been free, who defended their independence, and their rights against foreign and remote sovereigns;—sometimes against the Frank kings, sometimes against the German

emperors. This was the cause of the early and prodigious superiority of the Italian towns :— while in other countries, insignificant communes were with difficulty formed ; there, republics, and states arose.

This will explain the success in that part of Europe, of an attempt to organize society on republican principles. At an early period, republicanism subdued feudality, and became the predominant form of society. But it was not capable of being much extended, or perpetuated ; it contained but very few germs of amelioration,— a necessary condition of extension, and duration.

When we consider the history of the Italian republics, from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, we are struck by two facts apparently contradictory, but which nevertheless are both incontrovertible. We behold an admirable development of courage, activity, and genius, from which a great prosperity results,—a degree of liberty,—a movement unknown to the rest of Europe. But do we inquire what is the actual condition of the inhabitants, how they pass their lives, what share of happiness they enjoy ? The scene changes, it is impossible that any history can be more gloomy, more melancholy. Perhaps there never was any period, or country, where the destiny of mankind was more agitated, subject to more deplorable accidents ; where dissensions, crimes, and misery were more

abundant. Another fact becomes evident about the same time. In the political system of the greatest part of these republics, liberty was constantly diminishing. From a want of security, the citizens were unavoidably led to seek refuge in a less tumultuous, a less popular system, than that under which the state had been founded. Consider the history of Florence, Venice, Genoa, Milan, and Pisa;—you will every where discover, that instead of liberty becoming developed; instead of the circle of institutions becoming enlarged; the general course of events tended to restrict them, and gradually to concentrate power in the hands of a limited number of individuals. In a word, two things were wanting in these republics so vigorous, so brilliant, and so wealthy;—personal security, the first condition of social life; and the progress of institutions.

From thence, an evil arose which did not permit the attempt at republican organization, to become extended. Italy incurred the greatest danger from without, from foreign sovereigns, but this danger never reconciled these republics, or made them act in concert—they never united to resist the common enemy. Many of the most enlightened Italians, the most sincere patriots of our own day, have deplored the republican system of Italy in the middle ages, as the true cause which prevented her becoming a nation;—she was divided they say, into a multi-

tude of small states, too much occupied with their private interests, to enter into a confederation, and constitute an undivided political body. They regret that their country did not pass like the rest of Europe, through a despotic centralization which would have formed it into a single nation, and would have rendered it independent of foreigners. It seems then that a republican organization even under the most favourable circumstances, did not at that epoch, possess the principles of progress, duration, and extension—if we may be permitted the expression—it had no future. The organization of Italy, in the middle ages, may to a certain extent be compared to that of ancient Greece. Greece, was a country divided into small republics ; always rivals, frequently enemies ; but occasionally uniting for one common end. The advantage in this comparison is entirely in favour of Greece. There cannot be a doubt, that although history reveals the existence of many iniquities in Athens, Lacedæmon, and Thebes ; yet a much greater measure of order, justice, and security, were to be found in those states, than in the republics of Italy. Recollect, however, the very limited period of the political existence of Greece ; and consider what a principle of weakness is contained, in this minute division of territory and power. So soon as Greece came into collision with the great neighbouring states ; with Macedon, and Rome,

she fell. These small republics, although so glorious, so flourishing; knew not how to coalesce for their mutual defence. In Italy, where society and the human mind were much less developed, and vigorous than in Greece; the same misfortune was still more certain to occur.

If then a republican organization had so few chances of duration, in Italy, where it had triumphed; where it had overcome the feudal system; you will readily comprehend, that it was much less likely to succeed in the other countries of Europe.

I shall present you with a rapid sketch of its destinies.

A certain portion of Europe, bore a great resemblance to Italy—the provinces in the south of France, and those parts of Spain which bordered on it—Catalonia, Navarre, and Biscay. The towns had there made great progress; they had become rich, and important. Many inconsiderable feudal lords, had allied themselves with the citizens, part of the clergy also, had embraced their cause:—in a word, the situation of the country was nearly analogous to that of Italy. So also during the course of the eleventh century, and at the commencement of the twelfth, the towns of Provence, Languedoc, and Aquitaine, had a natural tendency to assume a political form similar to that which existed on the other side of the Alps; and to become independent republica.

But the south of France was in contact with the powerful feudal system of the north. The heresy of the Albigenses broke out. War was declared between the feudal, and the municipal portions of France. You all have heard of the Crusade against the Albigenses, commanded by Simon-de-Montfort. This was a conflict between northern feudality, and the attempted democratic organization of the south. Notwithstanding all the patriotic efforts of southern patriotism, the feudality of the north triumphed—political unity was wanting in the south, and civilization was not so far advanced as to render it possible for concert, and coalition, to supply its place. All attempts to organize society, on democratic principles failed; and the Crusade against the Albigenses, re-established the feudal system in the south of France.

In the mountains of Switzerland, republicanism at a somewhat later epoch, was more successful. Its theatre was much straitened, its only conflict was with a distant sovereign, who although commanding a force very superior to that of the Swiss; was by no means one of the most formidable monarchs of Europe. The conflict was sustained with great courage. The Swiss feudal nobility, allied themselves generally with the towns—a powerful assistance, which however changed the nature of the revolution it supported, and impressed it with a much more aristocratic,

and immutable character than it would seem it ought to have borne.

I now pass from the north of France to the communes of Flanders, to those in the vicinity of the Rhine, and to those belonging to the Hanseatic League. The democratic organization completely triumphed in the interior of towns, nevertheless even in its origin, we perceive that it was not destined to become extensive, or to obtain entire possession of society. The communes of the north, were surrounded, and pressed on by feudality—by lords, and monarchs—so that they were continually obliged to remain on the defensive. It is evident they had no intention of making conquests—they defended themselves with various success, they preserved their privileges, but they remained confined within their walls. The democratic movement was restricted to towns;—if we seek it in the country, we shall find no traces of its existence.

You perceive, gentlemen, the state of the republican attempt. It triumphed in Italy, but its chance of duration, and progression, was not great; it was repulsed in the south of France; it was established on a limited scale, in the mountains of Switzerland; and in the north, in the communes of Flanders, of the Rhine, and in the Hans towns, it was confined within the walls of the cities. But even in this condition, evidently inferior in strength to all the other ele-

ments of society, it inspired the feudal nobility with the greatest terror. The lords were jealous of the riches of the communes, and feared their power; the democratic spirit penetrated into the country; predial insurrection, became more frequent, and more obstinate. A great coalition against the communes was formed throughout Europe by the feudal nobility. The parties were not equal;—the communes were isolated, there was no intelligence, no correspondence between them—every thing was local. It is true that between the burghers of different countries a certain sympathy existed; the success, or reverse of the Flemish cities which were at war with the Dukes of Burgundy, excited a lively emotion in the French towns; but this emotion was transient and without result—no tie, no real union was established between them; the communes did not assist each other. Feudality had therefore a great advantage over them; but being in its own nature incoherent, and divided, it was not able to destroy them. When the conflict had lasted for a certain time; when it was evident that complete victory was out of the question; the feudal lords were compelled to recognise these small republics, to treat with them, and to admit them as members of the state. Then, a new order, a new political organization was attempted—a mixed organization, the object of which was to conciliate the

various elements of society ; and notwithstanding their profound mutual hostility, to cause the feudal nobility, the communes, the clergy, and monarchs, to act peaceably and in concert. This is what remains for me to explain to you.

You are all without doubt acquainted with the nature of the States-general of France ; the Cortes of Spain, and Portugal ; the Parliament of England ; the States of Germany. You also know what were the elements of these assemblies. The feudal nobility, the clergy, and the communes, met together for the purpose of endeavouring to unite society into one political body—to place it under one government, one code of laws. Under different names, these assemblies had all the same tendency, their object was the same.

I shall take as a type of this attempt the fact we are best acquainted with, and which most interests us—the States-general of France. I have said that this is the fact with which we are best acquainted ; yet, I imagine, the name of the *states-general*, will only awaken vague, and imperfect ideas in your minds. Perhaps no one amongst you could describe what was fixed, and regular, in the States-general of France ; of how many members those assemblies consisted ; what were their subjects of deliberation ; at what periods they were convened ; and how long their

sessions lasted. We are ignorant of these particulars—we cannot derive from history any clear, permanent, and general ideas on this subject. When we consider what was the actual character of those assemblies, they appear purely accidental, ultimate political expedients, both for the sovereign, and the people — expedients, to which monarchs had recourse when they were in want of money, and were unable to extricate themselves from their embarrassments — expedients resorted to by the people, when their burdens became so enormous that no other remedy could be suggested. The nobility formed part of the states-general; the clergy also had a place there, but they did not cheerfully attend—they knew that these assemblies were not their grand field of action; that it was not by such means they could hope to acquire much influence, much power over the government. The citizens did not attend more willingly. Their attendance was not to them, a privilege which they esteemed; but a necessity, they were compelled to submit to. What therefore was the political character of the states-general? They were sometimes perfectly insignificant; sometimes terrible. If the king happened to be the strongest, their humility, and their docility were extreme;—if the crown, on the contrary, was in a state of humiliation, if it actually needed the assistance of the states; they became a faction

—the instrument of some aristocratic plot, or of some ambitious intriguer. In a word, they were either mere assemblies of notables, or actual conventions. Consequently their works generally perished with them; they promised, they attempted much, but they did nothing. None of the great measures which have really influenced society in France; no important reform in government, legislation or administration, emanated from the states-general. We must not however suppose they were utterly useless. They produced a moral effect to which in general little attention has been paid; they served from time to time as a protest against political servitude, as a violent means of proclaiming certain tutelary principles;—for instance, that the country has a right to vote its own taxes, to interfere in its own affairs; to impose some responsibility on the agents of power. If these maxims were never suffered to perish in France, the states-general principally contributed to keep them alive:—and an institution performs no trifling service, which preserves in the minds, and manners of the people, a recollection both of the past deeds, and future claims of liberty. The states-general, rendered this service; but they never were a means of government; they never entered into the general political organization, they never accomplished the object for which they had been formed:—the fusion of all

the various societies into which the country was divided into one grand whole.

The Cortes of Spain, and Portugal, offer the same result, notwithstanding the diversity of circumstances. The importance of the cortes varied with the kingdoms, and periods, in which they were held. In Arragon, and in Biscay, during the debates regarding the succession to the crown, or during the war with the Moors, they were the most powerful, and were the most frequently convened. To certain cortes, for instance to those of Castile, in the year 1370, and 1373 the nobles and the clergy were not summoned to attend. There are many other accidental circumstances of which we ought to take notice, if time permitted us minutely to consider events. But in the general sketch to which I am obliged to restrict myself, I can only term the cortes—like the States-general of France—an *accident* in history; not a system, a political organization, a regular means of government.

The destiny of England was different. I shall not enter into many details on this subject. I intend on a future day, to enter into a special consideration of the political existence of England. I shall therefore content myself now, with indicating the causes which impressed on it a different character from that of the continental states.

In the first place, there were not any great

vassals in England,—no subjects in a condition to enter separately into collision with the crown. The barons, the great lords of England, were at an early period obliged to coalesce, and form a general league, to exist in common. Amongst the members of the higher aristocracy, the principle of association had been introduced; and their union, was a truly political union. Moreover, in England, the possessors of small fiefs, members of the feudal system, had been induced by a series of events which I cannot now explain; to unite themselves to the citizens, to take their place with them, in the House of Commons;—this assembly therefore possessed much greater power than the corresponding assemblies in continental states—a power really capable of influencing the government of the country. Let us consider the state of the British Parliament in the fourteenth century. The House of Lords, was the great council of the king; a council effectively associated to the executive force. The House of Commons, composed of deputies elected by the small proprietors of fiefs, and the citizens, had as yet scarcely any share in the government; but it established rights, and energetically defended private and local interests. The parliament considered as a whole, was not at that time the government of the country; but it was already a regular institution, a means of government adopted in prin-

ciple, and frequently indispensable in fact. The attempt to reconcile, and unite, the different elements of society, in order to form a single political body—an undivided state, had succeeded in England, although it had failed on the continent.

I shall say a very few words respecting Germany, merely to indicate the prevailing character of its history. In that country, few attempts were made to bring about political unity, or any general political organization; and those attempts, were not prosecuted with ardour. The different social elements remained there, much more distinct—more independent, than in any other part of Europe. Did we need a proof of this, we might find it in modern times. Germany is the only country of Europe, where the sovereign was for a long period elected according to the forms of feudality:—for I do not speak of Poland, or the Slavonic nations, which entered so late into the system of European civilization. It is moreover the only country of Europe, where ecclesiastical sovereigns have been permitted to exist in modern times; the only one, where free towns have continued to enjoy an actual political existence, a true political sovereignty.

It is evident that the attempt to amalgamate into one social body the elements of primitive

European society, had there been much less active, and effective than elsewhere.

I have now placed before you, the grand attempts at political organization, which were made in Europe, down to the close of the fourteenth century, and the commencement of the fifteenth. You have seen how they all miscarried. I have endeavoured slightly to point out the causes of their ill success,—they may all be reduced to one cause. Society was not then sufficiently advanced to be capable of union. Every thing had still a local, special, and incoherent character ; there was still too great a diversity both in the outward condition, and the intellectual state of mankind. There were no general interests, no general opinions, capable of governing particular interests, and opinions. Even men of the most enlightened, and liberal minds, had no idea of a public system of laws, and of administration. It was evidently necessary, that civilization should be very strongly and actively developed ; that it should mingle, assimilate, and amalgamate all these incoherent elements ; that a powerful centralization of interests, laws, manners, and ideas, should be formed ;—in a word, that a public power, a public opinion, should be created ; before this result could take place. We have now reached the epoch when this great work was at length accomplished.

LECT. X.] EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION. 339

Its first symptoms,—the state of mind, and manners, during the course of the fifteenth century ; their tendency to form a central government, and public opinion ;—will be the subject of our next lecture.

LECTURE XI.

GENTLEMEN,

We have arrived, as it were, at the threshold of modern history;—at the commencement of a form of society, the opinions and manners of which, forty years ago prevailed in France; which still subsist in the greater part of Europe, and exercise even over us, notwithstanding the metamorphosis our revolution has effected, a most powerful influence. It was in the sixteenth century, as I before observed, that Modern Society actually commenced. Before we enter on the consideration of this period, let us retrace the progress we have already made, the distance we have already travelled. We have discovered amidst the ruins of the Roman Empire, all the essential elements of Modern European Society; we have seen them become separated, and extended, independent of all assistance from each other. We have remarked during the first period of our history, the continual tendency of

these elements to separation ; to isolation ; and to a special, and local existence. Scarcely had this object been attained ; scarcely had Feudality, the Communes, and the Church, each assumed a distinct form, and taken its proper place ; when they attempted to reapproach each other, to become reunited, to form themselves into a general society—a national government, and power. To arrive at this end, the different countries of Europe sought to obtain from some one of the various systems which existed amongst them, the principle of social unity—a moral and political tie. All systems were tried—theocracy, aristocracy, democracy, and monarchy—but until the period we are considering, all these attempts had been fruitless ; no particular system, no particular influence, had been able to obtain the supremacy over society, and to exercise a paramount influence over it. We have seen that this ill success, was occasioned by the absence of general interests, and general ideas ; we have seen that every thing was too confined, too local too individual ;—that it was necessary that an active, and powerful system of centralization should take place, before society could be both extended, and cemented ; before it could at once become great and regularized—the end to which it necessarily aspired. This is the state in which we left Europe at the close of the fourteenth century.

But it was not possible for Europe at that time to comprehend all that I have pointed out to you. She knew not then precisely what she required, or what she sought. Notwithstanding, she endeavoured to supply her wants, as if she thoroughly understood what they were. After the close of the fourteenth century, after the ill success of all the attempts at political organization; Europe naturally and instinctively entered on the career of centralization. The chief characteristic of the fifteenth century, is the constancy, with which it tended to this result; with which it laboured to create general interests, and general ideas; to put an end to the spirit of locality, and specialty; to unite, to bring together both existences and minds; to create in fine, what until that period did not exist, on any great scale—nations, and governments.

This metamorphosis was accomplished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries;—but it was prepared in the fifteenth. It is this preparation—this secret and unnoticed tendency towards centralization, both in regard to social relations, and to ideas;—a work accomplished without premeditation, and without design, by the natural course of events; to which we must direct our attention at present.

We thus perceive, gentlemen, that man frequently prosecutes the execution of a plan he has not conceived—that he is not even acquainted

with. He is the free, and intelligent artificer of a work which is not his own ;—he does not recognise it, he does not comprehend its design, until long afterwards ; until its outward effects have been manifested, until its realities have become apparent ;—and even then he understands it but imperfectly. Nevertheless, it has been accomplished by his own free will, and by the development of his own intellect. Imagine a great machine, the plan of which is known only to a single individual ; but the execution of the various parts of which, is confided to different workmen, separated from, and unknown to each other. Not one of them is acquainted with the entire design of the work, or the definitive result they are concurring to produce ;—each however executes with free-will and intelligence, and by a voluntary and rational effort, the part that has been assigned to him. In like manner, the designs of Providence for the benefit of mankind, are executed by the hand of men :—and this explains the coexistence of the two facts which are apparent in the history of civilization. On one hand, all that relates to its destiny,—that which cannot be changed by human knowledge or will ; on the other, the part that the liberty and intelligence of man performs—what he contributes of his own, what his intellect and his will effect.

In order to comprehend the fifteenth century, in order to obtain a clear insight into this pro-

logue to Modern Society, if I may be permitted so to term it, we will divide the facts it contains into two different classes. We will first examine political facts—the changes which formed both nations, and governments. We will then pass on to moral facts,—we will consider the changes that took place in ideas and manners, and we shall then be able to discover what general opinions were in preparation.

In regard to political facts;—as the simplest and most rapid mode of investigation, I intend to examine all the principal states of Europe, and to give you an outline of what the fifteenth century effected for each of them; in what state it found, and how it left them.

I shall commence with France. The latter half of the fourteenth century, and the early part of the fifteenth, was as you all know, the epoch of the French national wars against the English:—the period of the struggle for the independence of the French name, and territory, against foreign dominion. It is sufficient to open the history of that period to be satisfied with what ardour,—notwithstanding much discussion, and treachery—every class of society in France, entered into this conflict;—what a noble example of patriotism was then shown by the feudal nobility, by the citizens, and even by the peasantry! If no other record of the popular feeling at that time existed, the history of Joan of Arc, would be a more than

sufficient evidence of the zeal of the people in the cause. Joan of Arc sprung from the people—she was inspired and sustained by the sentiments, the belief, and the passions of the people. She was regarded with distrust, with ridicule, and even with enmity, by the courtiers, and the chiefs of the army; but the people, and the soldiery, were her unflinching supporters. It was the peasants of Lorraine, who despatched her to the assistance of the citizens of Orleans. No other event so strongly marks the popular character of this war, and the sentiment which animated the whole of the country.

In this manner, French *nationality* began to arise. Until the accession of the House of Valois, the feudal character was predominant in that country—the French nation, the French spirit, and French patriotism, did not exist. With the princes of the House of Valois, France began to appear as a nation. It was during the wars, in which they were so constantly engaged,—amidst the vicissitudes of their destiny, that the nobles, the citizens, and the peasantry, became united by a moral tie, by the bond of a common name, a common honour, and a general desire to expel the foreigner. We must not, however, expect to find here any truly political spirit—any grand design of unity, either in the government, or the institutions of the country, according to our ideas at this day. Unity in France at that

epoch, resided only in its name, its national honour, and the existence of a national sovereignty,—of whatever nature provided it was not a foreign one:—and thus, the wars with England, powerfully contributed to form the French nation, and to impel it towards unity.

At the same period, when France was undergoing a moral formation, when the national feeling was becoming developed; she also underwent a material formation—her territory became defined, extended, and settled. At that epoch, most of the provinces, which now compose France, were incorporated in the kingdom. Under the reign of Charles VII. after the expulsion of the English almost all the provinces they had occupied, Normandy, Angoumois, Tourraine, Poitou, Saintonge, &c., became definitively French. Under Louis XI., ten provinces—of which three, were subsequently lost, and reconquered—were united to France,—Roussillon, Cerdayne, Burgundy, Franche Comté, Picardy, Artois, Provence, Maine, Anjou, and Perche. The successive marriages of Anne of Brittany, with Charles VIII., and Louis XII.; obtained that province, for us. Thus, at the same period, and during the course of the same events; the kingdom, and the national mind, became moulded into form;—the moral, and the material state of France, simultaneously acquired unity and strength.

Let us pass from the nation to the government.—We here distinguish facts of the same nature; we advance towards the same result. The French government, had never been so totally destitute of unity, adhesion, and force, as it was in the reign of Charles VI., and during the early part of the reign of Charles VII. After the close of that reign, every thing became changed; the government gradually acquired strength, extension, and organization—all the great resources of government; taxation, military force, and the administration of justice, became developed on a grand scale, and with some degree of organization. This was the period in which standing armies were formed;—the cavalry was composed of free companies (*compagnies d'ordonnance*), and the infantry of free archers. By means of these companies, Charles VII. was enabled to re-establish some degree of order in the provinces which had been desolated by the disorders, and exactions of the soldiery, even after the war was terminated. All contemporaneous historians, bear testimony to the marvellous effect of the free companies (*compagnies d'ordonnance*). It is about the same period that the *Taille* (or poll-tax), one of the principal revenues of the crown, became perpetual.—This was a great blow to the liberty of the people, but it powerfully assisted in regularizing the government, and increasing its power.

At the same period, that grand instrument of power, the administration of justice, became more extensive, and better organized. Parliaments were more frequent; five new parliaments were instituted in a very short space of time;—under Louis XI., the parliaments of Grenoble (in 1451), of Bordeaux (in 1462), and of Dijon (in 1477), under Louis XII., the parliaments of Rouen (in 1499), and of Aix (in 1501).—The parliament of Paris, at that period acquired much more importance and stability; both in regard to the administration of justice, and the regulation of the police within its jurisdiction.

Thus, in all that concerned the military force, the mode of taxation, and the administration of justice;—that is to say, in all that constitutes its essence—government, in the fifteenth century, had acquired in France, a character of unity, regularity, and stability, previously unknown:—a public power, at length entirely superseded all the former feudal powers.

At this period also, a change of a very different nature, was accomplished;—a change less visible, a change which has been less noticed by historians; but which is perhaps still more important:—I mean the alteration which Louis XII. effected in the mode of government.

Much has been said respecting the quarrels of Louis XI. with the higher nobility; of his humili-

ation, of the great lords, and the favour he showed to the citizens, and the people.

There is some truth in this, although the fact has been greatly exaggerated, and although the conduct of Louis XI. towards the different classes of society, was frequently much more injurious, than beneficial to the state. But he effected something much more important than this. Until his reign, the government had been almost entirely carried on by force—by material means. Persuasion, address, adroitness in leading the people, and inducing them to adopt the views of the government, in a word, policy,—a deceitful and a treacherous policy I admit, but which displayed both skill, and prudence—had hitherto been very slightly regarded. Louis XI. employed intellectual, rather than moral means, in his government; he preferred fraud, to force; the Italian, to the feudal policy. Consider the two men whose rivalry fills this epoch of our history, Charles the bold, and Louis XI.—Charles, is the representative of the ancient system of government:—he ruled only by violence, he constantly had recourse to war; he was utterly destitute of patience, he never dreamt of influencing the human mind, in order to render it an instrument of success.—On the contrary, Louis XI. found a pleasure in avoiding the employment of force; he delighted in winning over men by conversation, by the skilful management of their

interests, and their dispositions. He did not alter any institutions, he did not alter the outward system ; but he changed the secret resources, the tactics of power. It was reserved for modern times, to attempt a still greater revolution ; to endeavour to introduce both into the schemes of policy, and into its mode of action, justice instead of selfishness ; publicity instead of fraud. It is not however the less certain that a great step towards improvement had already been made when the continual application of force was abandoned, and an appeal was more frequently made to intellectual superiority, when governments attempted to rule by moral means, instead of overturning society. This great work was commenced by Louis XI.,—and in spite of all his crimes, of all his faults, and the perversity of his nature, we owe this benefit to the activity of his powerful intellect.

I next turn to Spain. I there find events nearly of the same nature. It was also in the fifteenth century, that Spain, was united into one nation. In that century, the long wars of the Christians, against the Mahometans, were terminated by the conquest of Granada. The territory also became centralized. By the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, the two principal kingdoms Castile, and Arragon, were united under the same power. The royal power acquired greater extension, and stability, in Spain

as it had done in France ; but it was supported by institutions of a much more severe character, and which bore more appalling names. The inquisition, was established instead of the parliaments. That institution, always contained the principle of what it afterwards became, but its first appearance, was very dissimilar from its later form. It was at first, a political, rather than a religious institution ; and was intended to maintain order, much more than to spread the faith.

The analogy holds good in persons, as well as in institutions. With less cunning, less mental activity, a less restless and intriguing spirit ; the character of Ferdinand the Catholic, resembles that of Louis XI. I am not disposed to seek for fancied similarities, or arbitrary parallels ; but here, the analogy is strong, and is impressed on general facts, as well as on details.

A similar analogy, may be found in Germany. It was about the middle of the fifteenth century, in 1438, that the princes of the House of Austria regained the Empire, and with them, the imperial power acquired a permanency, it had been wanting in before. The election of the Emperors after that period, was only the consecration of hereditary succession. At the close of the fifteenth century, Maximilian I. definitively founded the supremacy of his family, and the regular exercise of a central authority.

Charles VII., had been the first to create in France, a standing army, for the maintenance of order, and Maximilian, in his hereditary dominions, applied the same means to the same end. Louis XI., established a regular post for letters in France; Maximilian I., did the same in Germany. In every country, the progress of civilization, was equally advantageous to the development of the central power.

The history of England, in the fifteenth century, consists of two great events, the wars with France, and those of the two Roses;—a foreign and a civil war. These wars, so different in character, had nearly the same results. The war with France, was maintained by the people, with a degree of ardour, which almost exclusively redounded to the advantage of royalty.

The English nation, which even in those days, was more skilful than any other in defending its wealth, and its resources, bestowed them on its kings, at that epoch, without either measure, or foresight. In the reign of Henry V., a very considerable tax—the custom-house duties—was voted to the king for life, from the time of his accession. When the foreign war had terminated, the civil war, which at first had been connected with it, still continued:—the Houses of York, and Lancaster disputed the crown. At length, when this terrible conflict was decided; the higher nobility of England, found them-

selves ruined; their numbers greatly diminished, and utterly incapable of maintaining the power they had previously exercised. The coalition of the great barons, could no longer rule the sovereign. The House of Tudor, ascended the throne, and with Henry VII., in 1485, the era of political centralization—the triumph of monarchy commenced.

Monarchy, was not established in Italy—at least not by name—but this does not affect the result. The fifteenth century, saw the fall of its republics. Even in those instances, where the name still subsisted, power became concentrated in the hands of one, or of a limited number of families—the republican life was extinct. In the north of Italy, almost all the Lombard republics, had been included in the Duchy of Milan. In 1434, Florence fell under the dominion of the Medici. In 1464, Genoa became subject to Milan. The greater number of the republics, both great and small, were replaced by sovereign houses. A short time subsequent, foreign princes laid claim to a part both of the North and South of Italy—to Naples, on one hand, and to the Milanese, on the other.

Whichever country of Europe we turn to, whatever portion of its history we consider; whether we study nations, or governments; institutions, or territory; we every where see, the

ancient elements, the ancient forms of society, ready to disappear; traditional liberties annihilated; new powers more regular and concentrated elevated in their stead. There is something very mournful in this view of the destruction of the ancient forms of European liberty. It caused many painful feelings in its day. The patriots of the fifteenth century, in France, in Germany, but especially in Italy, combated with ardour, and bitterly deplored, a revolution, which they saw was about to establish on every side, what they justly deemed, the triumph of despotism. We are compelled to admire their courage, and respect their sorrow; but at the same time, we cannot but admit that this revolution, was not only inevitable, but that it was generally useful. The primitive system of Europe—the ancient feudal, and communal liberties—had failed to organize society. The essence of social life, is security and progression. Every system which is not productive of order in the present time, and of movement towards the future, is vicious, and will speedily be abandoned. In the fifteenth century this was the fate of the ancient political systems, of the ancient liberties of Europe. They had been found incapable of conferring security, they had not advanced the progress of society. It was necessary, that these objects should be sought for elsewhere,

that other principles, should be tried. This is the signification of the facts I have placed under your observation.

From the same period we may date another fact, which has held a considerable place in the political history of Europe. It was in the fifteenth century, that the relations of governments with each other, began to be frequent, regular, and permanent. At that epoch, were formed for the first time, those grand combinations of alliance, both offensive and defensive, which afterwards produced the system of equilibrium. Diplomacy dates its origin, from the fifteenth century. In fact, towards the close of that century, we see the great continental powers—the Popes, the Dukes of Milan, the Venetians, the German Emperors, the Kings of Spain, and France—enter into intimate relations with each other, into mutual treaties and alliances,—they began to understand each others' policy, and endeavoured to maintain the balance of power. Thus, at the moment when Charles VIII. entered on his expedition to conquer the kingdom of Naples, a grand league was formed against him, by Spain, the Pope, and the Venetians. The league of Cambray, was formed against the Venetians a few years later (in 1508). The holy league directed against Louis XIIth, succeeded (in 1511) the league of Cambray. All these combinations were the work of Italian policy, and were pro-

duced by the anxiety each sovereign felt to retain peaceable possession of his own dominions; and the fear that if any one amongst them obtained more than his proportion, he would thereby acquire an undue preponderance in Europe.

This new order of things was extremely favourable to the development of monarchy. On one hand, the foreign relations of states can never be well conducted excepting by an individual, or a very limited number of persons; as a certain degree of secrecy is required in these relations;—on the other, the mass of the people were in those days so little enlightened, that the consequences of such a combination between different powers, escaped their view: they had no direct, and moral interest in the matter; they cared little about it, and left all such affairs, to the direction of the central power. Thus, diplomacy, even from its commencement, fell into the hands of sovereigns;—and the idea that it was their exclusive privilege,—that although a country might be free, and even might possess the right to levy its own taxes, and to interfere in its own affairs, yet that it had no right to meddle with foreign diplomatic relations; this idea, I say, became established throughout Europe, and was considered a recognized principle, a maxim of general law. Turn to the history of England, in the sixteenth and seven-

teenth centuries, you will see how powerful it was in that country, and the obstacles it opposed to the liberties of the English, in the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. Absolute power, continually defended itself against the rights of the country, under the plea, that peace, and war, commercial relations, and all foreign affairs, are a part of the royal prerogative. The people, have always shown a great backwardness to contest this portion of the prerogative;—and they suffered so much the more from their timidity in this respect; because in the sixteenth century—the period on which we are now entering—the history of Europe, is essentially diplomatic.

Foreign relations, are during nearly three centuries, the most important fact of history. On the continent at least, the internal affairs of every state became regularized, and were no longer subject to violent concussions—no longer absorbed the whole of the public activity. Foreign relations, wars, negotiations, and alliances, occupy the attention, and fill the pages of history; and consequently the most important part of the destiny of nations, was abandoned to the royal prerogative—to the central power.

It was almost impossible it should have happened otherwise. Civilization must have made a very great progress, political science, and in-

telligence, must have become most extensively developed, before it can be safe to admit the public to interfere in affairs of this nature. The mass of the people, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, were by no means so far advanced, as to warrant their being trusted with such concerns. What occurred under James I. of England, in the commencement of the seventeenth century? His son-in-law, the Elector Palatine, who had been elected King of Bohemia, lost his kingdom, and with it his hereditary dominion, the palatinate. The whole of Protestantism, became interested in his favour; and England especially felt deeply concerned for him. There was a general manifestation of public opinion, to endeavour to force James to take the part of his son-in-law, and attempt to regain the palatinate for him. Parliament, furiously demanded this war, and promised to provide all the means of sustaining it. James, however, was very indifferent about it: he eluded the demand, entered into some trivial negociation, dispatched a few troops into Germany, and then sent to inform his parliament, that it would require £900,000 to prosecute the war with any chance of success. It is not asserted, and it does not in fact appear, that his calculation was exaggerated. But parliament shrunk back with surprise, and terror, from such an impost; and it was with great difficulty, that

£70,000 was voted to re-establish a prince, and reconquer a kingdom, three hundred leagues distant from England. Such was the ignorance, and the political incapacity of the people in these matters. They acted without any knowledge of facts, they did not trouble themselves with any responsibility, and were certainly not capable of interfering in a regular and efficacious manner. This cause principally occasioned foreign relations to fall into the hands of the central power, which alone was capable of directing them,—I do not say, with a view to the public advantage, which certainly was not always consulted,—but with some degree of consistency, and good sense.

You see, gentlemen, that under whatever point of view we consider the political history of Europe at that epoch;—whether we fix our attention on the internal situation of the country, on the relations between different states, the administration of war, of justice, or of taxation,—we shall every where discover the same character; we shall every where see the same tendency to centralization, to unity, to the formation, and preponderance of general interests, and public powers. This was the secret work of the fifteenth century,—a work which did not immediately produce any apparent results, any actual revolutions in society; but which prepared the way for them.

I am about to place before you facts of a different nature;—moral facts, which relate to the development of the human mind, to general ideas. There, also; we shall recognise the same phenomena, we shall arrive at the same results.

I shall commence with an order of facts, which has frequently occupied us, and which, under the most varied forms, has always held a great place in the history of Europe;—the facts relative to the Church. Until the fifteenth century, no general and powerful ideas—excepting religious ideas—influenced the masses. The Church alone, was invested with the power to regulate, to promulgate, and prescribe them. It is true, that attempts at independence, and separation, had been made, and that it cost the Church much trouble to overcome them. But until this epoch, she had been successful in subduing them; the creeds condemned by the Church, never acquired a general, and permanent hold of the popular mind;—the Albigenses themselves had been crushed. Dissent, and conflict, continually occurred in the Church, but without producing any striking and decisive result. At the opening of the fifteenth century, a very different fact was manifested—new ideas, public and acknowledged wants, the desire for change, and reform, agitated the Church herself. The close of the fourteenth, and the commencement of the fifteenth centuries, were marked by

the great schism of the West, the consequence of the translation of the Holy See to Avignon, and the creation of two popes; one at Avignon, the other at Rome. The conflict between these two papacies, is what is generally termed the great Western Schism. It commenced in 1378. In 1409, the Council of Pisa, sought to put an end to it; by deposing the two popes, and nominating a third, Alexander V. Instead of subsiding, the schism became more violent. There were now three popes, instead of two. Disorder, and abuses, constantly increased. In 1414, the Council of Constance, was assembled; at the instance of the Emperor Sigismund. Its object was not to nominate another pope; but to undertake the reform of the Church. It first proclaimed the indissolubility of the universal Council, its superiority to the Papal power;—it endeavoured to make these principles prevail in the Church, and to reform the abuses which had been introduced into it, especially the means which the Court of Rome employed to extort money. In order to attain this end, the Council named what we should term a commission of inquiry; composed of deputies from different nations, who had been present at the Council. This commission was authorized to investigate what abuses disfigured the Church, what remedies it was necessary to apply, and to make a report

to the Council, in order that proper means might be taken to carry all requisite reforms into execution:

But while the Council was occupied with this labour, the question was suggested ; whether it could proceed to the reform of abuses, without the sanction of the pope, without the participation of the visible head of the Church ? This question was negatived by the influence of the Roman party ; supported by honest, but timid members. The Council elected a new pope, Martin V., in the year 1417. The pope was directed, on his part, to present a plan for reform of the Church. This plan was not approved of, and the Council separated. In 1431, another Council assembled at Basel, with the same design. It undertook to prosecute the work of reformation commenced by the Council of Constance ; but it was not more successful than that Council had been. Schism soon appeared in the Council, as it had done in Christendom. The pope transferred the Council of Basel to Ferrara, and afterwards to Florence. Part of the prelates refused to obey the pope, and remained at Basel : and as there had previously been two popes, there were now two councils. The Council of Basel continued to occupy itself with schemes of reform, and nominated a pope, Felix III. After some time, the

Council was transferred to Lausanne, and was dissolved in 1449, without having effected any thing.

Thus we see that the Papacy obtained the victory, and remained in possession of the field of battle, and of the government of the Church. The Council had been unable to accomplish what it had undertaken; but it effected something it had not contemplated, and which survived it. When the Council of Basel had failed in accomplishing its plans of reform; monarchs became penetrated with the ideas it had proclaimed, and adopted some of the institutions it had suggested. In France, with the decrees of the Council of Basel; Charles VII. instituted the Pragmatic Sanction, which was proclaimed in Bourges in 1438. It permitted the election of bishops, the suppression of annates, and the reformation of the principal abuses, which had been introduced into the Church. The Pragmatic Sanction was declared law, in France. The Diet of Maynz, adopted it in Germany, in 1439; and it also became a law of the German Empire. What the spiritual power had vainly attempted, the temporal power appeared determined to accomplish.

A fresh reverse attended these projects of reform. The Council had failed and so did the Pragmatic Sanction. It speedily perished in Germany:—the diet abandoned it in 1448, in conse-

quence of a negociation with Nicholas V. Francis I. of France also abandoned it in 1516, and substituted in its place, his *concordat* with Leo X. The reform attempted by princes, was not more successful, than that suggested by the clergy. But we must not suppose it was totally ineffective. As the Council left some traces of its existence behind it ; so the Pragmatic Sanction in like manner, produced effects which survived it and performed a great part in modern history. The principles of the council of Basel, were powerful and fruitful. They had been adopted, and maintained, by men of superior minds, and energetic characters. John of Paris, d'Ailly, Gerson, and a great number of distinguished men, in the fifteenth century, devoted themselves to their defence. It was in vain that the Pragmatic Sanction, was abandoned ; its general doctrines on Church Government, on the reforms necessary to be effected, had taken root in France ;—they became perpetuated, they were adopted by the parliament, they deeply impressed the popular mind, and produced first the Jansenists, and more recently the Gallicans. All the series of maxims, and efforts tending to the reform of the Church, which commenced with the council of Constance, and ended with the four propositions of Bossuët ; emanate from the same source, and were directed towards the same end, — it is the same fact, under successive

transformations. Notwithstanding that the attempts to effect a legal reform in the Church failed in the fifteenth century; they contributed to advance the progress of civilization, and exercised, though indirectly, an immense influence.

The councils displayed much sagacity in endeavouring to effect a legal reform;—for that alone, was capable of preventing a revolution. About the same period when the council of Pisa endeavoured to suppress the great Western Schism, and that the council of Constance, undertook to reform the Church, the first attempts at popular religious reform, were exhibited with violence in Bohemia. The preaching, and the career of John Huss, may be dated from 1404, the period of his first public teaching at Prague. Here then we perceive two modes of reform marching side by side,—one proceeding from the Church, attempted by the ecclesiastical aristocracy, judicious, but hesitating and timid;—the other, originating beyond its pale violent, passionate, and hostile to it. A contest arose between these two powers, these two schemes. The council sent for John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, to Constance; and condemned them to be burnt as heretics, and revolutionists. These events, gentlemen, are perfectly intelligible now,—we are able to comprehend why these separate reforms were simultaneously intro-

duced, one of them by the government, and the other by the people, which though inimical to each other, yet emanated from the same cause, and tended to the same objects, and though at variance concurred to the same result: This is what happened in the fifteenth century. The popular movement led by John Huss, was arrested for a moment;—the war of the Hussites occurred three or four years after the death of their master,—it lasted some time, it was very violent, but at length the Empire triumphed. But the reform suggested by the councils, having been found ineffective, and the end proposed not having been attained, the popular reform still continued in a state of fermentation—it waited for the earliest opportunity of displaying itself, and it found that opportunity, at the commencement of the sixteenth century. If the reform undertaken by the council, had been well conducted, it is possible that the popular reform would never have taken place. But one, or the other, was certain to succeed; for their coincidence reveals a strong necessity.

This, then, is the state, in which we find the European world, as regards religious belief, at the close of the fifteenth century;—an aristocratic reform, had been attempted without success, a popular reform, had been commenced and stifled, but was ready to break out afresh. But the ferment of the human mind, was not at

that epoch, solely confined to religious creeds. It was, as you all know, during the course of the fourteenth century, that the study of the Greek, and Roman classics, was reintroduced into Europe. You know, how ardently Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and their contemporaries, sought for Greek, and Latin MSS., published, and disseminated them; and what joy was occasioned by any new discovery of this kind. It was during the midst of this movement, that a school arose which performed a much more important part in the development of the human mind, than is generally supposed. I mean, the *Classic School*. I must request you not to attach to this phrase, the sense that it now bears:—it was not then a mere system, the mere debates of a literary society. The classic school, of that epoch, became penetrated with admiration not only for the writings of the ancients—for Homer, and Virgil, as poets,—but for the whole of the ancient society, for the institutions, the opinions, and the philosophy of antiquity, as well as for its literature. Antiquity was it must be confessed, very superior, both as respects its policy, its literature, and its philosophy, to Europe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is not therefore surprising, that it should have exercised a very great influence; that the greater number of the enlightened, active, elegant, and fastidious minds, of those

days, should have become disgusted with the rude manners, the confused ideas, the barbarous customs, of their time, and country, and should have devoted themselves, with ardour, to the study, and almost to the worship, of a society, so much better ordered, so much more fully developed, than their own. Thus was formed that school of philosophical liberals (*libres penseurs*) which appeared at the commencement of the fifteenth century; and which included prelates, jurisconsults, and men of learning.

When the movement was in full progress, Constantinople was taken by the Turks; the empire of the East fell; and the fugitive Greeks sought refuge in Italy. They brought with them much knowledge of antiquity, numerous MSS., and a thousand hitherto unknown facilities for studying the ancient forms of civilization. You will readily comprehend that their presence redoubled the admiration, and the ardour of the Classic School. At this period, the High Church, especially in Italy, had attained the period of her greatest development;—not in respect of actual political power, but of wealth and luxury. She unrestrainedly gave herself up to all the pleasures of a civilization, at once effeminate, indolent, elegant, and licentious; to the love of letters, and the arts; to social and material enjoyments. Reflect on the sort of life, which was led by the men, who have been cele-

brated in the literary, or political events of those times—Cardinal Bembo for instance. You will be surprised at the mixture you will find of luxurious indulgence, and intellectual development; of enervated manners, and boldness of thought. When we contemplate the state of ideas, the social relations of Roman society at that epoch; we might imagine ourselves in France, in the eighteenth century. We discover the same taste for intellectual progress, for new ideas, for an easy, and agreeable life;—we behold the same effeminacy, the same licentiousness, the same want of political energy, of moral ideas, combined with singular sincerity, and activity of mind. The literati, of the fifteenth century, had the same relations with the prelates of the High Church, at that epoch; that the philosophers, and men of letters, had with the nobility of the eighteenth: they all entertained the same opinions, their manners were the same, they lived agreeably together, and paid little attention to the great changes that were in preparation around them. The prelates of the fifteenth century—Cardinal Bembo amongst the number—had certainly no more expectations of the appearance of a Luther, and a Calvin; than the courtiers of the eighteenth had of the French revolution. Their situations were analogous.

Three grand facts at this period, are apparent in the moral existence of society. 1st. an eccle-

siastical reform, attempted by the Church itself; *2dly.* a popular religious reform; and *3dly.* an intellectual revolution which formed a school of philosophical liberals (*libres penseurs*). And all these metamorphoses, were prepared, during the progress of the greatest political changes that had ever occurred in Europe—in the midst of the attempts to centralize both nations, and governments.

This is not all—at the same epoch, the external activity of mankind was most extensively displayed; voyages were undertaken; discoveries were made, and inventions of all kinds appeared. At this epoch, the great expeditions of the Portuguese, along the coasts of Africa, were undertaken, the passage of the Cape of Good Hope, was discovered by Vasco de Gama, America was discovered by Christopher Columbus, and European commerce became prodigiously extended. A thousand new inventions were exhibited, others already known in a limited sphere became popular, and generally used. Gunpowder changed the system of war—the compass changed the system of navigation. The art of painting in oils was perfected, and filled Europe with master pieces of art. Copperplate engraving, invented in 1460, multiplied, and disseminated, the production of artists. Linen paper became common. At length, between 1436, and 1452, printing, was

invented:—printing, the theme of so much declamation, and which has served as a theme for so much common place admiration; yet the merit, and grand results of which, no mere ordinary declamation, or common places, will ever do justice to.

You now perceive, gentlemen, the grandeur, and activity of this century—its greatness has yet by no means been clearly revealed—the results of its activity, have not yet been made apparent. Tumultuous reforms, appeared to have failed—governments to have gained strength—the people to have become satisfied. Society seemed to be preparing to enjoy a better order of things, and a more rapid progress. But the grand revolutions, of the sixteenth century, were at hand: their seeds were sown in the fifteenth. These revolutions, will form the subject of my next lecture.

LECTURE XII.

GENTLEMEN,

WE have frequently deplored the disordered, and chaotic state of European society,—we have complained of the difficulty of comprehending and delineating a society, so incoherent, so dissolved, so scattered. We have looked forward with impatience to the period, when general interests, order, and social unity, should prevail. We have now reached that period: we are now entering on an epoch, when every thing may be included in general facts, and general ideas;—an epoch of order and unity. We here encounter a difficulty of another kind. Until now we have found it difficult to connect facts, to co-ordinate them, to seize on their common characteristics, to discover if any general principles existed between them. Modern Europe, offers an example of a contrary nature; all the elements, all the

incidents of social life, modify, act, and react on each other; the relations between individuals, are much more numerous, much more complicated. The same fact may be distinguished in the relations of the people, with the government of their country; in the relations between different states; in ideas, and in all the labours of the human mind. In the periods we have hitherto considered, a great number of facts appear separated, unconnected, and destitute of reciprocal influence. Now, we no longer perceive the same character of isolation; all things have come into contact; they intersect each other, and their proximity induces a change in their nature. Can any thing be more difficult, than to seize the true unity, in so great a diversity; to determine the direction of so extended, and complicated a movement; to form a correct idea of this prodigious quantity of different elements which are so intimately connected; and, finally to determine the general and predominant fact, which includes a long series of facts, which characterizes an epoch, and is the faithful expression of its influence, of the part it has performed in the history of civilization?

You will be able to appreciate this difficulty, in contemplating the grand event, with which we have to occupy ourselves to-day.

In the twelfth century, we met with an event, which had a religious origin, although its nature

was not religious. I mean the Crusades. Notwithstanding the greatness of the event, its long duration, and the variety of incidents that resulted from it; it was easy for us to discover its general character, and to determine with some degree of precision, its unity, and its influence. We have to-day to consider the religious revolution, of the sixteenth century, which is generally termed *the Reformation*. I must in passing, be permitted to say, that I use the word *Reformation*, as a simple and recognised term, synonymous with *religious revolution*, and without attaching to it any opinion. You will very soon perceive, how difficult it is to recognize the true character of this grand crisis, to describe in a general manner, what it was, and what it performed.

We must study the Reformation from the commencement of the sixteenth, to the middle of the seventeenth century, for within that period, is included, as we may say, the entire spirit of the event;—its rise, and its termination. All historical events, have, as it were, a determinate career. Their consequences, are infinitely prolonged; they are connected both with the past and the future; but it is not the less true, that they have a peculiar, and a limited existence, that they arise, increase, occupy with their development a certain portion of their existence; then begin to fade, and at length vanish from the scene,

to make way for some new event, of a similar nature.

The precise date assigned to the origin of the Reformation, is not important. We may take the year 1520, when Luther publicly burnt at Wittenberg, the bull of Leo X. which condemned him; and by so doing, formally separated himself from the Roman church. In the interval, between this epoch, and the middle of the seventeenth century,—the year 1648, when the treaty of Westphalia was concluded,—the life of the Reformation is comprised. Here is a proof of it. The first and greatest effect of the Reformation, was to create two classes of states; the Protestant and the Catholic; to place them in opposition, and to excite strife between them. With various fortune, this conflict endured from the commencement of the sixteenth century, to the middle of the seventeenth. After the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the Catholic and the Protestant States, for the first time, mutually recognized each other, reciprocally consented to allow each other to exist, and engaged to live together in friendship and peace, without regard to the diversity of their religious tenets. After the treaty of Westphalia, religion ceased to be the dominant principle in the classification of the states, in their foreign policy, in their relations and alliances. Until that epoch, though varied by circumstances, Europe was essentially divided

into a Catholic and a Protestant league. After the treaty of Westphalia, this distinction disappeared;—states formed alliances, or engaged in wars, without reference to differences in religion. At this period, therefore, the progressive career of the Reformation, reached its termination, although its consequences have never ceased to develop themselves.

We will rapidly survey the career of the Reformation; and endeavour to form a general idea of it, from the mere nomenclature of events and men. You will perceive when I shall have finished this outline, when I shall have completed this dry and incomplete catalogue; how great must be the difficulty of summing up a series of facts, so varied and complicated, and uniting them into one general fact; of determining the true character of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, and assigning to it, its place in the history of our civilization.

The Reformation, broke out in the midst of a great political event; the war between Francis I., and Charles V.,—between France and Spain, —a war, engaged in at first for the possession of Italy, afterwards for the German Empire, and finally, for the preponderance in Europe. At this period, the House of Austria, became the dominant power of Europe. At the same time also, England under Henry VIII, began to take part in continental policy, in a more regular and

consistent manner, and to a greater extent, than she had ever done before.

Let us follow the course of the sixteenth century in France. It is occupied by long religious wars, between the Protestants and the Catholics. The nobles, sought to turn these wars, to their own advantage; they endeavoured to regain the prerogatives they had lost, and to limit the monarchical power. This is the political character of our religious wars; of the league of the contest between the Guises and the Valois, which was terminated by the accession of Henry IV.

In Spain, in the reign of Philip II., the United Provinces revolted. The struggle was between the inquisition, and civil and religious liberty—the one, represented by the Duke of Alva, the other by the Prince of Orange. While freedom, by the aid of perseverance and prudence, triumphed in Holland; it perished in Spain, where absolute power, both lay, and ecclesiastical prevailed.

In England, the reigns of Mary, and Elizabeth are to be noticed; the war of Elizabeth, the head of Protestantism, with Philip II.; the accession of James Stuart to the English throne; and the commencement of the grand struggle between monarchy and the people.

About the same time, new powers were created in the North. Sweden, was raised to consideration, by Gustavius Vasa, in 1513. Prussia was

created by the secularization of the Teutonic order. The Northern Powers, assumed a place in European policy they had not previously held, but the importance of which presently appeared in the thirty years war.

I return to France. In the reign of Louis XIII., Cardinal Richelieu altered the internal administration of France, entered into strict relations with Germany, and supported the Protestant cause. In Germany, during the greater part of the sixteenth century, the war against the Turks was prosecuted. At the commencement of the seventeenth, the thirty years war occurred, the greatest event of modern oriental Europe, —Gustavus Adolphus, Wallenstein, Tilly, the Duke of Brunswick, and the Duke of Weimar, are the greatest names that Germany has yet to boast of.

At the same epoch, Louis XIV. ascended the French throne, and the Fronde commenced. In England, the revolution which destroyed Charles I., exploded.

You will observe that I only name the great events of history; those events which are known to all the world; you see how numerous they are, how varied, and important. If we seek for events of another nature, events less apparent, which it is less easy to designate, we shall find that they also abound, in this period of history. At this epoch, a great change took place in the

political institutions of almost every nation ;—pure monarchy prevailed in the greater number of the principal states of Europe ; while in Holland, the most powerful republic in Europe was formed ; and in England, constitutional monarchy obtained a triumph, nearly, if not quite complete. In the church, the ancient monastic orders, lost almost all their political power, and were replaced by a new order of a different character, whose importance, ‘perhaps erroneously,’ is considered much greater than theirs ;—I mean the Jesuits. At the same epoch, the council of Trent obliterated all that remained of the influence of the councils of Constance and Basel and assured to Rome, a definitive supremacy over the entire ecclesiastical order. Turn from the Church, contemplate philosophy, the unrestricted career of the human mind ;—two great men present themselves to our view, Bacon and Descartes ; the authors of the greatest philosophical revolution, which the modern world had yet experienced ; the chiefs of two schools which disputed the right of dictating to it. At this period, Italian literature had attained its highest perfection, and the literatures of France, and England had their rise. Finally, at this period, great colonial establishments were founded ; and the commercial system became prodigiously developed.

Thus, gentlemen, under whatever point of

view you may consider this epoch; events of every kind, political, philosophical, ecclesiastical, and literary, are much more numerous, more varied and important than they were in preceding ages. The activity of the human mind was manifested in every way,—in the private relations between individuals; in their relations with the government; in the relations between different states; in pure intellectual labour; in a word, it was a period distinguished by great men, and great events. And amidst all their great events, the religious revolution, which we are considering is the greatest of all. It is the most remarkable occurrence of the time; it has communicated its name to the epoch, and determined its character. Amidst the numerous powerful causes, which performed so conspicuous a part, the reformation was the most powerful; that in which all others centred, which modified them all, or became itself modified by them. Our task then will be to characterize with truth and precision, the event, which in a period replete with great events, controlled all the others; the cause, which produced the grandest results, in an epoch when so many great causes existed.

You will readily comprehend how difficult it is, when facts so important and diversified, and yet so dependant on each other occur; to sum them all up into one grand historical whole. This is however, a necessary work. When events have

been accomplished,—when they have become a portion of history, the essential part, that which mankind more especially seek, are general facts; the concatenation of causes and effects. This is what we may term the undying portion of history, that with which all generations must become acquainted in order to comprehend past events, or their own position. This desire to generalize, to arrive at some rational result, is the most powerful, and elevated of all intellectual wants; but we must not permit ourselves to remain satisfied with incomplete and hasty generalizations. There is no pleasure more alluring than that of assigning the general character, the permanent results, of an epoch or an event, after a rapid and cursory view. The human mind like the human will is, always eager for action, impatient of obstacles, desirous of liberty, anxious for results; it willingly forgets facts, which repress and constrain it, but though it forgets, it cannot destroy them; they still exist, to convict it of error, and to assist in its condemnation. There is only one mode of avoiding this danger; it is to study facts with patience, and resolution before we attempt to generalize and conclude. Facts are for the mind, what rules of morality are for the will. The mind is compelled to study facts, to feel the weight of them; and it is only after this duty has been performed in the fullest and most satisfactory manner; that she is permitted to spread her wings and take

flight, towards that higher region from whence all things will be manifested in their completeness, and their results. If impatience urges a too rapid elevation, before the whole of the territory has been accurately surveyed; the chance of error is very great—a fall is almost inevitable. It is like a first error in an arithmetical calculation, which leads to others without end. So in history, if at the outset, we do not thoroughly investigate every fact, if we allow ourselves to be seduced by a too hasty desire for generalization; it is impossible to say how far we may wander from the direct road.

In some measure, I condemn myself by these observations. During the progress of this course, I have only been able to attempt general outlines, a general recapitulation of facts, which we have not closely studied together. Having now reached an epoch, more difficult to characterize than any that has preceded it,—where the chance of error is much greater, I think it necessary to apprise you of the danger that may be incurred—to warn you, as it were, against my own work. This done, I shall continue my labours, and shall endeavour—as I have hitherto done, with respect to other events,—to point out the dominant fact of the reformation; to describe its general character; to say, in a word, what place this great event holds, what part it has performed in the progress of European civilization.

You will recollect at what stage we left Europe in the fifteenth century. During the course of that century we saw two great attempts made, to bring about a religious revolution—*1st*, a legal reform attempted by the councils; *2dly*, a revolutionary reform in Bohemia attempted by the Hussites. We saw them both stifled—they mutually destroyed each other; and yet we felt assured, that a reformation could not be prevented; that it must necessarily be produced under one form or another; and that what the fifteenth century ineffectually attempted, the sixteenth must inevitably accomplish. I shall not enter into any details respecting the events of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, they are too well known to render it necessary; all I purpose is, to describe its general influence on the destinies of mankind.

When we inquire what were the causes which determined this great event; we hear it imputed by the enemies of the reformation to accident—to some error in the course of civilization. They tell us for instance, that the sale of indulgences having been confided to the Dominicans, the jealousy of the Augustines was excited;—Luther was an Augustine monk, the quarrel between the two orders, was therefore the determining cause of the reformation. Others have ascribed it to the ambition of sovereigns, to their rivalry with the ecclesiastical power, to the avidity of the lay

nobility, who wished to seize the possessions of the Church. Thus, has the reformation been accounted for by its enemies :—they consider only the worst side of human nature and man ; and attribute its origin, to private interests, and passions.

On the other hand, the friends, and partisans of the reformation, have endeavoured to prove that it owed its origin solely to the pure desire of effectually reforming the abuses of the Church ; they represent it as the means of redressing all religious grievances — as an attempt conceived and executed with the sole design, of reconstituting a pure, and primitive Church. Neither of these explanations, appears to be well founded. The second, is more true than the first, at least it is more grand, more consonant to the extent, and importance of the event ; still I do not think it exact. In my own opinion, the reformation was not an accident, the result of chance, or of some personal interest ;—neither was it the fruit of a simple design of religious amelioration, of utopian humanity, and virtue. It was produced by a more powerful cause,—a cause very far superior to all particular causes. It was a great movement of the human mind towards freedom, a desire hitherto unfelt to investigate, to judge, freely and uncontrolled those facts and opinions, which until that time Europe had received, or was presumed to have received from the hands of autho-

riety. It was a grand effort of the human mind to enfranchise itself,—and to give it, its true name,—an insurrection of reason against absolute power in spiritual affairs. Such, in my estimation, is the true, the general, and predominant character, of the reformation.

When we consider on one hand what was the condition of the human mind ; on the other, what was the condition of the spiritual power—of the Church, which ruled over the human mind, we are struck by a fact of a twofold nature.

On the side of human reason, a much greater activity—a much greater desire for development, than had ever been felt before. This new activity, was the result of many different causes ; which had been accumulating for centuries. For example, in some ages, heresies arose, attained some degree of importance, and were then replaced by others. Philosophical opinions had a similar destiny. The labours of the human mind, both in the career of religion, and philosophy, had become accumulated from the eleventh to the sixteenth century ;—at length the moment arrived, when some result might naturally be expected. Besides, all the means of instruction which the Church had provided or supported, had already produced their fruits. Schools had been instituted : these schools had sent forth, men possessing some knowledge, and whose numbers continually increased. These men at last

desired to think for themselves : they felt themselves stronger than they had ever yet been. The human mind had moreover become regenerated, and reinvigorated, by the revival of ancient learning ; the progress, and effects of which I described to you in my last discourse.

All these united causes impressed on thought at the commencement of the sixteenth century, an energetic movement, an imperious desire for progressive amendment.

The condition of the spiritual power, which governed the human mind, on the contrary had become inert, and stationary. The political credit of the Church of the Court of Rome, was much diminished ;—it no longer governed European Society. Europe, had fallen under the dominion of temporal governments. Nevertheless, the spiritual power retained all its pretensions, all its splendour, all its external importance. It shared the fate of almost all antiquated governments. Most of the complaints that were made against the Church at that period, had scarcely any foundation. It is not true that the Court of Rome, was excessively tyrannical in the sixteenth century ; it is not true, that abuses were then more numerous, more insupportable, than they had ever before been. On the contrary, the ecclesiastical government, had perhaps never been more mild, more tolerant, more entirely disposed to abstain from interference, provided its own existence was not com-

promised ; provided the rights it had till then enjoyed, were recognised, notwithstanding they remained inactive ; provided the same means of existence were secured to it ; and the same tributes were paid. The Church, would willingly have consented to leave the human mind undisturbed, if the human mind, would have treated her with equal consideration. But it is precisely at the moment when a government is least efficient, least powerful, and least mischievous, that it is assailed : because its enemies venture at such a time to attack it—while it was strong they dared not.

It is therefore evident—merely from an examination of the state of the human mind at that epoch, and the condition of its government, that the character of the reformation was a sudden and impetuous movement towards liberty—a grand insurrection of human intelligence. This without doubt, was its principal and most influential cause—a cause superior to all particular interests, whether of nations, or of sovereigns : superior also, to the mere desire of reform, or the necessity for the redress of the grievances, which were so much complained of at that time.

Let us imagine that during the first years of the reformation, when all its claims had been advanced, all its complaints rehearsed, the spiritual power, should have admitted their justice, and have said “ I consent to all the reforms you re-

quire; I will re-establish a more legal and religious system; I will suppress all wrongs, all arbitrary imposts, and tributes; I will even consent to modify and explain doctrines, and bring them back to their primitive sense. But when all these grievances are redressed, I must still retain my position, I must still continue as before to govern the human mind, with all my former authority, my former rights. Do you imagine that the religious movement would have been satisfied with this compact, and would have ceased to advance? For my part I cannot think so; I truly believe it would have continued its career, and after having demanded reform, it would next have required liberty. The crisis of the sixteenth century, was not merely reformatory; its character was essentially revolutionary. It is impossible to deny that it exhibited all the merits, and all the vices, of a revolution—it produced all the effects of one.

Let us for a moment consider the destiny of the reformation; what was its first and most important effect, in those countries where it became developed. Remark moreover that it became developed in situations the most diversified, amidst very unequal chances of success;—if we therefore discover, that difference of situation, in quality of chance, has not affected its general results; that it has every where pursued a definite object, and preserved a certain character;—it is

evident I say, that the character which has surmounted all the diversities of situation, all the inequalities of chance, must be the fundamental character of the event, and that the results it invariably displays must be those which were the constant objects of its pursuit.

Now we perceive, that wherever the religious revolution of the sixteenth century prevailed, if it did not completely emancipate the human mind, it procured for it at least a new, and immense accession of liberty. It certainly left the human mind subject to the chances of liberty, or servitude, which depend on political institutions ; but it abolished or disarmed the spiritual power,—the systematic, and formidable subjugation of the mind. This is the result that the reformation has invariably attained, amidst the most opposite combinations of outward circumstances. In Germany, no political freedom existed,—the reformation by no means introduced it. It rather strengthened, than enfeebled the power of sovereign princes ; it rather opposed the free institutions of the middle ages, than aided their development. Nevertheless, it excited and cherished a greater freedom of thought in Germany, than in any other country. In Denmark,—in a country subject to absolute power, which penetrated the municipal institutions, as well as the general institutions of the state,—there also, through the in-

fluence of the reformation, the mind was emancipated, and freely exercised itself in every career.

In the republic of Holland, in the constitutional monarchy of England, although long restricted by an oppressive religious tyranny; the emancipation of human mind was equally accomplished. Lastly in France, in a situation apparently the least liable to be affected by the religious revolution,—in that country where it had been suppressed; even there, it produced the principles of intellectual freedom, and independence. Until the year 1685, that is to say, until the revocation of the edict of Nantes; the reformation enjoyed a legal existence in France. During that long period, the reformers published polemical works and engaged in discussions, which provoked their adversaries to reply and enter into argumentative contests with them. This single fact, this controversial war, between the old and the new opinion; disseminated throughout France a much more real, a much more active liberty, than is commonly supposed;—a freedom, which redounded to the benefit of science, and morality, to the honour of the French clergy, and to the advantage of the human intellect. Contemplate the conferences of Bosseut with Claude, consider all the religious polemics of that period, and ask yourselves, if Louis XIV., would have permitted such freedom on any other subject. A greater

degree of liberty prevailed in the discussions between the reformers, and the opposite religious party in France, in the seventeenth century, than was permitted on any other subject.

Religious ideas were bolder, religious questions were more unreservedly treated of, than political subjects were, even by Fenelon himself, in his *Telemachus*. This state of things only ceased with the revocation of the edict of Nantes. Now, from 1685, to the grand display of human intellect in the eighteenth century, an interval of forty years only intervened, and the influence of the religious revolution on intellectual liberty, had scarcely ceased, when that of the philosophical revolution commenced.

You perceive, gentlemen, that wherever the reformation penetrated ;—that wherever either as conquering, or conquered, it performed an important part ; its constant, prevailing, and general results were, a great increase in the activity, and freedom of thought ; a great step towards the emancipation of the human mind.

And not only was this the result of the reformation, but it would appear that it desired nothing more. Intellectual progress, and the emancipation of the human mind were the primary, and fundamental characters of the event. When they were attained, it sought for nothing more. Thus, in Germany, far from demanding political freedom, the reformation remained contented

in the midst of—I do not exactly say, political servitude, but—the absence of liberty. In England, it tolerated the hierarchical constitution of the clergy, and the existence of a church as full of abuses as that of Rome, and much more servile than its predecessor. Why did the reformation, which in some respects, showed itself so ardent and unbending, there became so yielding and to supple? Because, it had obtained the general result it ambitioned;—the abolition of the spiritual power, the enfranchisement of the human mind. I repeat, that when the reformation had obtained that object; it was willing to accommodate itself to every system, to any situation.

Let us now prove this assertion by its contrary; let us consider, what occurred in those countries, where the religious revolution had not penetrated; where it was early stifled; or where, it was not allowed to attain any development. History replies, that the human mind was not enfranchised; and of this, the condition of two great states, Spain and Italy, afford abundant proofs. In those countries of Europe, where the reformation attained much influence, the human mind has acquired during the last three centuries, a degree of activity and liberty until then unknown; but in those states, where it was not able to penetrate, the mind has fallen during the same period, into inaction and effeminacy.

The proof, and the counterproof, have oc-

curred simultaneously, and afford the same result.

The emancipation of the mind, and the abolition of absolute power in spiritual affairs, form the essential character of the reformation; the general result of its influence; the predominating fact in its destiny.

I use the word *fact*, designedly. The emancipation of the human mind was during the progress of the reformation, rather a fact, than a principle; rather a result, than an intention. The reformation, in this respect, I think, performed more than it undertook—more perhaps than it desired. Unlike many other revolutions, the consequences of which have been very inferior to their conception; in which the reality, by no means corresponded with the idea;—the reformation was more splendid in its results, than in its design;—it appears more glorious as an event, than as a system. It never fully comprehended how much it performed; and would have shrunk from the avowal, if it had.

What is it that the enemies of the reformation, continually reproach it with? Which of its results, are continually flung in its face, to reduce it to silence?

The two principal are these—*first*, the multitude of different sects, the prodigious licence of thought, the destruction of all spiritual authority, the dissolution of a general religious society

—*secondly*, tyranny and persecution. The reformers are told—"you provoke licentiousness, you produce it; but yet when you discover it, you wish to constrain and repress it. And how do you repress it? By the most hard and violent means,—you persecute heresy too, by virtue of an illegitimate authority."

Consider all the grand attacks directed against the reformation—without noticing purely dogmatical questions;—to one of these two fundamental forms, every objection that is made against it, may be reduced.

These reproaches much embarrassed the reformers. When the multitude of different sects was charged against them, instead of acknowledging the legitimacy of their free development; they sought to anathematize dissenters; were annoyed by their existence, and sought some apology for it. Were they taxed with persecution? They defended themselves with embarrassment; they alleged necessity in justification of it; they asserted they had a right to repress and punish error, for they alone knew the truth, their creed and their institutions, were alone legitimate; and if the church of Rome, had no right to punish the reformers; it was, because she was in the wrong.

And when the dominant party amongst the reformers were reproached with persecution, not by their enemies, but by the children of the reformation; when the sects which they anathe-

matized exclaimed, "We only do what you did, we separate ourselves from you, as you separated yourself from Rome;"—they were still more embarrassed, and too frequently, their only reply was an increase of severity.

The reason of this inconsistency, is, that the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, although it laboured to destroy absolute power in spiritual affairs, was ignorant of the true principles of intellectual freedom; it had enfranchised the human mind, but still assumed the right to govern it by legal enactments. Freedom of inquiry was its actual *result*; but its *principle* was only to substitute a legitimate, for an illegitimate power. It had never ascended to the first cause, it had never descended to the ultimate consequences of its work. Thus were two faults committed—on one hand, it neither knew, or respected all the rights of the human intellect; and while it claimed them for itself, it violated them elsewhere. On the other, it did not investigate how far the rights of authority, in intellectual matter, ought to extend;—I do not speak of that coercive authority, which never can possess any right to interfere with reason; but of a purely moral authority, which acts only on the mind, and solely by means of influence. Something is wanting in the greater number of the reformed countries, to the good organization of intellectual society; to the regular action of an-

cient and general opinions. The rights and the claims of tradition, have not been reconciled with those of liberty; and the cause of this must undoubtedly be sought in the fact, that the reformation did not fully comprehend and accept, either its own principles, or effects.

From the same cause also proceeded, a certain narrowness of mind, a certain inconsistency, which was frequently taken advantage of by its enemies. The adversaries of the reformation, knew very well what they were about, and what they required; they could point to their first principles, and boldly admit all the consequences that might result from them.

No government was ever more consistent, and systematic than that of the Romish church. In *fact*, the court of Rome was much more accommodating, yielded much more than the reformers; but in *principle*, it much more completely adopted its own system, and maintained a much more consistent conduct. There is immense power, in this full confidence in what is done; this perfect knowledge of what is required; this complete and rational adaption, of a system and a creed. The religious revolution of the sixteenth century, may be adduced as a striking example of the truth of this assertion. Every one is aware that the principal power which was instituted to combat against it, was the order of the Jesuits. Consider the history of that order; they failed every where; and even in those countries, where they.

took any leading part, they injured the cause with which they interfered. In England, they caused the downfall of kings ; in Spain, the ruin of the people. The general course of events, the development of modern civilization, the freedom of the human mind,—all the forces which the Jesuits were created to attack, ranged themselves against that institution and overcame it. And not only were the Jesuits conquered, but recollect the means they were compelled to employ. No splendour, no grandeur ; they were not able to put powerful masses of men in motion ; their modes of action were subordinate, secret, and obscure, and by no means calculated to strike the imagination : consequently, they were never able to obtain that public interest, which is attached to all great deeds, whatever may be their principle, or their object. The party on the contrary against which they fought, was victorious, and the victory was both splendid, and decisive. They performed splendid actions, and employed noble means ; they excited the people, disseminated great men throughout Europe, and in open day, altered the destiny and the condition of the states. Every thing, in a word, was unfavourable to the Jesuits ; both fortune and appearances, —neither practical sense which requires success ; or the imagination, which looks for splendour, were gratified by their destiny. Still, it is cer-

tain, that they possessed the elements of greatness: a grand idea is attached to their name; to their influence, and to their history. Why? because they worked from fixed principles; which they fully and clearly understood, and the tendency of which they entirely comprehended; that is to say, grandeur pervaded both these thoughts, and their will; and saved them from the ridicule that is attached to constant failures, and miserable means. In the reformation on the contrary, where the event surpassed its conception, where a knowledge of its first principles, and of its ultimate consequences appeared to be wanting; something incomplete, inconsequent and narrow has remained, which has placed the conquerors themselves in a state of rational and philosophical inferiority, the influence of which has occasionally been felt in events. The conflict of the new spiritual order of things, against the old, is I think, the weak side of the reformation, that which has frequently rendered its position embarrassing, and which has prevented it from defending itself so well as it ought to have done.

I might consider the religious revolution under many other aspects. I have said nothing, and I have nothing to say respecting its dogmas; what it has effected for religion, properly so called, the relations of the human soul with the divinity, and a future existence;—but I can exhibit the variety

of its relations with society, where its results were of the most profound importance. For example, it restored religion to the laity;—to the Christian world. Until then, religion had been as it were the exclusive domain of the clergy, of the ecclesiastical order,—the clergy distributed the proceeds of religion, but were alone in possession of its substance, and claimed almost an exclusive right to speak of it. The reformation, reintroduced religious belief into general circulation; it reopened to the Christian world the path of faith, which had hitherto been closed against them. It had likewise a second result; it almost entirely banished religion from politics, and restored independence to the temporal power. At the same moment, when religion became, as it were, once more the heritage of the faithful, it ceased to govern society. In the reformed states, notwithstanding the diversity of ecclesiastical contributions; even in England, where the constitution most nearly resembles the ancient order of things, the spiritual power no longer seriously pretends to direct the temporal.

I might enumerate many other consequences of the reformation, but I must restrain myself. I am satisfied with having placed under your observation its principal characteristics,—the emancipation of the human mind, the abolition of

absolute power in spiritual affairs. This work, though not entirely perfected, is yet the greatest step that in our time, has been made towards the attainment of this object.

Before I conclude, I beg of you to remark, the striking similarity that exists, in the history of modern Europe, between the destiny of religion, and that of civil society, in the revolutions they have undergone.

Christian society, as you will recollect I said in speaking of the Church, was at first perfectly free,—it was formed through the influence of a common creed, without institutions and without any government, properly so called; regulated solely by moral and variable powers, according to the wants of the moment. Civil society, in Europe, had a precisely similar commencement—it was first, in part at least, composed of bands of barbarians—it was perfectly free, every one remained attached to it only so long as it was his pleasure to be so, without being constrained by laws or constituted authorities. When this state ceased,—for it was impossible it could continue to exist, when social life had become considerably developed,—religious society placed itself under an essentially aristocratic government—it was governed by a body of priests, bishops, and councils, in short by an ecclesiastical aristocracy. The same fact occurred when civil society emerged

from barbarism. It was the aristocracy, the feudal laity, who became its rulers. Religious society abandoned the aristocratic form of government to subject itself to pure monarchy;—this is the signification of the triumphs of the court of Rome over the councils, and the European ecclesiastical aristocracy. The same revolution was accomplished in civil society; it was in like manner, by the destruction of the aristocratic power, that monarchy prevailed, and gained possession of the European world. In the sixteenth century, an insurrection took place in religious society against the system of pure monarchy,—against absolute power in spiritual affairs. This revolution introduced, sanctioned, and established, the spirit of free inquiry in Europe. In our own days we have seen a similar revolution in the civil order—an event of the same nature. Absolute power in temporal society has been in like manner attacked and vanquished. You perceive that the two societies have undergone the same vicissitudes, and have been subject to the same revolutions, but the religious society has always taken the lead in this career.

We are now, gentlemen, in possession of one of the great facts of modern society;—the emancipation of the human mind; the right of free inquiry. At the same time, we see political centralization prevail almost every where. I shall in

my next lecture, treat of the revolution in England,—of that event when freedom of inquiry and pure monarchy, both resulting from the progress of civilization, appeared on the scene together, for the first time.

LECTURE XIII.

GENTLEMEN,

You have seen, that during the course of the thirteenth century, all the elements, all the facts of ancient European society, had terminated in two essential facts—freedom of inquiry, and centralization of power. The first prevailed in religious, the second in civil society. The emancipation of the human mind, and the triumph of pure monarchy occurred at the same period.

It would have been strange if these two facts after a certain time, had not come into collision, for they were of most opposite natures: one, was the defeat of absolute power in spiritual affairs; the other, its establishment in temporal concerns; the former, prepared the fall of the ancient ecclesiastical monarchy, the latter, accomplished the ruin of the ancient feudal and communal liberty. You have already seen that the cause of the

simultaneous appearance of these two facts, was, because religious society had made a more speedy progress than civil, and its revolutions in consequence occurred at an earlier period. Religious society had already reached the epoch of the emancipation of individual reason, when civil society had only advanced so far as the concentration of all particular powers, into one general power. The coincidence of the two facts, instead of arising from their similitude, did not prevent their contradiction. They both were marks of progress in the course of civilization, but of different stages of that progress; their moral date was different, though they coincided in actual time. It was inevitable that they must come into collision, that many conflicts must arise between them before they could become reconciled.

It was in England, that the first shock took place. The conflicts between freedom of inquiry, the fruit of the reformation; and the destruction of political liberty, the fruit of the success of pure monarchy;—the attempt to abolish absolute power in temporal affairs, which had already been done in spiritual: this is the true signification of the revolution in England, this is the part it has performed in the history of our civilization.

Why was England the scene of this conflict? Why did the revolutions in the political world, approach in that country, nearer in time to the

revolutions in the moral world, than they did on the continent?

Monarchy, in England, was subjected to the same fate as it was on the continent. It attained under the reign of the Tudors, a degree of concentration and energy, it had never previously exhibited. I do not mean to assert, that the practical despotism of the Tudors was more oppressive, and caused more suffering in England than that of their predecessors had done. Tyrannical, unjust, and vexatious proceedings were, I believe, as frequent during the time of the Plantagenets, perhaps, even more so. I also believe, that at the period when the Tudors reigned in England, the system of pure monarchy was more rude, more arbitrary on the continent than it was in that country. The new fact which became apparent during the reign of those princes, was the systematic form, that absolute power assumed. Monarchy claimed a primitive and independent sovereignty; it held a new language. The theoretic claims of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., were very different from those of Edward I. or Edward II.; although the power of the two latter kings, was neither less arbitrary or less extensive. It was the principle, the rational system of monarchy, which was changed in England in the sixteenth century; rather than its practical power. Royalty,

declared itself absolute, superior to all laws, even to those it professed a desire to respect.

On the other hand, the religious revolution, was not effected in England by the same means which had accomplished it on the continent—in England, it was the work of the sovereigns themselves. The seeds of a popular reform, had however been deposited there; some attempts had been made to render them productive; and had they been left to themselves, they would probably have become developed in the course of time. But Henry VIII., put himself at the head of the movement—the supreme power became revolutionary. The result of this was, that the reformation in England, at least during the earlier part of its career, was much less perfect than the reformation in continental states, so far as regarded the suppression of abuses, of ecclesiastical tyranny, and the enfranchisement of the human intellect. As might have been expected the interests of its authors were principally considered. The king, and the bishops who were there continued, divided between them the riches, and the power of which they had deprived the preceding government, the papacy. The effect of this was presently felt. Although the reformation was said to be completed, almost all the causes which had rendered it necessary and made it desired, still subsisted. It reappeared under a

popular form, it preferred as many complaints against the bishops, as it had formerly done against the court of Rome—it accused them of being only so many popes. Whenever the general fate of the religious revolution was compromised, whenever it became necessary to oppose the ancient church, every section of the reformed party united together to repulse the common enemy ; but when the danger was past, the internal conflict recommenced. The popular reformers, attacked the system of reformation, which was upheld by the royal and aristocratic factions ; denounced its abuses, complained of its tyrannical character, called on it to fulfil its promises, and to abstain from re-establishing, what it had already destroyed.

About the same epoch, a movement towards liberty, was made in civil society,—a desire was experienced for political freedom, which had hitherto been unfelt, or at least had remained powerless. During the course of the sixteenth century, the commercial prosperity of England, increased with extreme rapidity, and at that time, many of the ancient territorial possessions and baronial properties changed hands. Sufficient attention has not been paid to the fact, of the progressive division of landed property in England, during the course of the sixteenth century ; the consequence of the ruin of the feudal aristocracy and of many other causes, which it would

occupy too much time to enumerate here. Every document proves the prodigious augmentation of the number of landed proprietors. The lands in a great measure, passed into the hands of the *gentry*, or lesser nobility, and the middle classes. The higher nobility—the House of Lords, was at the commencement of the seventeenth century, much less rich than the House of Commons. Commercial wealth was very greatly increased, at the same time that this great change took place in territorial property. While these two facts were in progress, a third intervened,—a new movement of the human mind.

During the reign of Elizabeth, a very great development of literary and philosophical activity occurred in England. It was a period of bold and extended ideas. The puritans unhesitatingly admitted all the consequences of narrow, but powerful doctrines; other minds of a less moral character, and unfettered either by systems or fixed principles sought with eagerness, all those ideas which promised some gratification to their curiosity, some food for their ardent imaginations. Wherever the movement of intelligence is a real pleasure, liberty will very soon be found to be requisite; and when liberty is obtained, it will quickly pass from the public mind, into the constitution of the state.

On the continent, in some of those countries where the reformation had made some progress;

the same desires, the same necessity for political liberty, were manifested ; but the means of success were wanting. These new desires, these new wants, met with no sympathy ; they found no support, either in institutions or manners ; they consequently remained vague, and uncertain, and sought in vain to satisfy themselves. In England, it was very different. In that country, the spirit of political liberty, which reappeared in the sixteenth century, as a consequence of the reformation, found in existing institutions, and in the entire social state, means both of support and of action.

No one is ignorant of the origin of the free institutions of England—how a coalition of the great barons forced King John to sign Magna Charta. But it is not so generally known, that Magna Charta, was from time to time, confirmed by almost all the monarchs of England. It was confirmed more than thirty times between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. And not only was the charter confirmed, but new statutes were continually added to it, in order to maintain and extend the rights and institutions, it guaranteed. It continued to exist, without a break, without an interval. During the same period, the House of Commons was organized, and took its place amongst the sovereign institutions of the country. Its foundations were laid in the time of the Plantagenets. At that epoch, it did not

perform any important part, it was not the actual government of the state, and did not even exercise any considerable influence,—it never interfered in the government, except by the command of the king, and then with reluctance and hesitation ; it appeared more solicitous not to engage, and compromise itself, than eager to augment its power. But whenever it was necessary to defend private rights, the fortune or the family of a citizen, in a word, whenever individual liberties were in question, the House of Commons fulfilled its duty, with energy and perseverance ; and laid the foundation of those principles, which are the basis of the English constitution.

After the time of the Plantagenets, but especially during the reigns of the Tudors, the House of Commons, or rather the entire parliament, appeared under a very different aspect. Individual freedom, was not then so well defended, as it had been during the time of the Plantagenets. Arbitrary imprisonment, and the violation of private rights, were of much more frequent occurrence, and often passed without remark. On the other hand, parliament became of much greater importance in the government of the state. Henry VIII., required some support, some public instrument to assist him in changing the religion of the country, and regulating the order of succession ; and he employed for this end, the parliament, but especially the House of Commons.

That assembly, which under the Plantagenets, had been only an instrument of resistance, a guarantee of private rights; became under the Tudors, an instrument of government, and of general policy,—so that at the close of the sixteenth century, although it had served, or succumbed to, almost every form of tyranny, its importance had become greatly augmented, its power had been established,—that power which is the foundation of representative government.

When we consider the free institutions of England, at the close of the sixteenth century, we find what follows :

1st. Maxims and principles of liberty, which had been constantly preserved in written documents, and which the country and its legislators never lost sight of.—2d. Precedents and examples of liberty; mingled it is true, with precedents and examples of a contrary nature; but sufficient to legitimate, and sustain the claims of liberty; to support its defenders against despotism and tyranny.—3d. Special and local institutions; replete with all the germs of liberty;—the jury, the right of convening popular assemblies, of wearing arms, the independence of municipal administrations, and jurisdictions.—4th. The power of parliament, which had become more than even necessary to royalty; for, the greater part of the independent revenues of the crown, its domains, and feudal rights, &c.

having become dilapidated, the sovereign could not dispense with a grant from parliament, even for the supply of his own exigencies.

The political situation in England, in the sixteenth century, was therefore very different from that of the continent. Notwithstanding the tyranny of the Tudors, and the systematic triumph of pure monarchy, a firm support, a safe mode of action, existed in that country for the newly awakened spirit of liberty.

Two national wants were at that time, simultaneously felt in England :—on one hand, a desire for religious liberty, and revolution in religious affairs, in the bosom of the already partially reformed church;—on the other, a desire for political liberty, which was so greatly endangered by the progress of pure monarchy. The parties representing these two wants, in order to aid their own progress, were certain to avail themselves of all the means that hitherto had been successfully used by either of them. They accordingly entered into alliance. The party, which desired to carry out a religious reform, called in the aid of political liberty, to assist its faith and conscience, against the king and the bishops. The friends of political liberty, applied for help to the leaders of the popular religious reform. The two parties united to combat absolute power, both in the spiritual and the temporal orders—a power entirely concentrated in the hands of the king.

This was the origin of the English revolution, and its true signification.

It was, therefore, especially devoted to the defence, or to the conquest, of liberty. For the religious party, it was a means; for the political party, an end; but both parties were actuated by the love of liberty, and were obliged to pursue it in common. There was never any actual quarrel between the episcopal party and that of the puritans; the struggle was not respecting dogmas in points of faith, properly speaking. Great and important differences of opinion, without doubt, existed between them; but this was not the principal point. Practical liberty was what the puritans wished to wrest from the episcopalians, and it was for that they contended. A religious party, however, existed at that period, which aimed at founding a system, establishing its own doctrines, its forms of discipline, and of church government—this was the presbyterian party; but, though it did its best, it was never able to accomplish all it desired. Placed on the defensive, oppressed by the bishops, not being able to perform any thing without the aid of the political reformers, (its allies and necessary chiefs,) liberty was its grand object. Liberty was the general concern, the universal idea of all parties which took part in the movement, whatever might be their diversities. Considered under a general point of view, the revolution of England was

essentially political; it was accomplished amongst a religious people, and in the midst of a religious age; the ideas and the passions of religion were used by it as successful instruments; but its original design, and its definitive end, were essentially political, tended towards freedom, and aimed at the abolition of absolute power.

I intend to present a rapid sketch of the different phases of this revolution—to exhibit separately, the grand parties which succeeded each other in it. I shall then consider it with reference to the general course of European civilization—I shall mark its place and its influence; and you will, I think, be satisfied as well from the detail of facts, as from a general view of this revolution, that it was the first collision between free inquiry, and pure monarchy, the first explosion of the conflict between these two great powers.

Three principal parties appeared at this grand crisis, three revolutions were contained in it, and became successively exhibited on the scene. Each party, and each revolution, was divided into a political and a religious section; the first led the way, the second followed, but they were essentially necessary to each other; and the double character of the event is impressed upon all its phases.

The first party which appears, that under whose banner all the others marched at the commencement of the revolution, was the party advocating constitutional reform. At the period when the

Long Parliament was assembled in 1640, every one said, and many sincerely believed, that a constitutional reform was all that was necessary; that the ancient laws, the ancient practices of the country, contained within themselves; a sufficient remedy for all abuses, and the means of re-establishing a system of government in conformity with the wishes of the people. This party loudly condemned, and sincerely desired to prevent, illegal imposts, arbitrary imprisonments, and all acts disavowed, as we may say, by the recognised laws of the state. But concealed under these ideas, existed a belief in the divine right of the king, that is to say, of absolute power. A secret instinct, it is true, warned them that there was something false and dangerous in this power; and, therefore, they did not wish to bring it too forward; but, when hardly pressed, or forced to explain themselves, they were obliged to admit, that they considered royalty a power superior to all human origin, above control; and they became its defenders in time of need. At the same time, they held, that, although this sovereignty was absolute in principle, yet, that it ought to be exercised in accordance with certain rules, certain forms, that it ought never to pass beyond certain limits, and that these rules, these forms, and limitations, were sufficiently established, and guaranteed by Magna Charta, by those statutes which confirmed it, and by the ancient laws of

the country. This was their political creed. In religious matters, the constitutional reformers considered, that the bishops had assumed far too much authority, that their political power was too great, that their jurisdiction was too extensive, that it ought to be restricted, and its exercise watched over. Still, they warmly supported episcopacy; not only as an ecclesiastical institution, as a system of church government, but as a necessary support of the royal prerogative, as a means of defending and sustaining the supremacy of the king in spiritual affairs. The political sovereignty of the king, exercised according to recognised forms, and within legal and acknowledged limits;—his religious supremacy applied and sustained by the Church:—such was the twofold system of the constitutional reformers. The principal chiefs of this party were Clarendon, Culpepper, Lord Capel, and even Lord Falkland; although the latter was a more ardent friend to popular freedom. It also comprised almost all the nobility who were not slavishly devoted to the court.

Behind this party another advanced, which I shall term the political revolutionists. They thought that the ancient guarantees, the ancient constitutional barriers, had been, and were insufficient for the protection of liberty, that a great change, an actual revolution, was required, not in the form only, but in the realities of government.

that it was necessary to deprive the king and the privy council of their independent power, and to transfer political preponderance to the House of Commons; that the government, properly speaking, ought to belong to that assembly and its leaders. This party did not avow its intentions, and its ideas, in so open and systematic a manner as I have done, but these were, in fact, its doctrines, and its political tendencies. Instead of the absolute power of the king, instead of pure monarchy, the political revolutionists wished to establish the sovereignty of the House of Commons, as representing the country. Under this idea was concealed that of the sovereignty of the people—an idea which they were far from comprehending in all its extent, or from desiring to carry out to its remoter consequences; but which presented itself, and was admitted by them under the form of the political sovereignty of the House of Commons.

A religious party, the presbyterians, were strictly allied to the political revolutionists. The presbyterians desired to effect a reform in the Church analogous to that which their allies meditated in the state. They wished that the Church should be governed by assemblies—that the power over religious affairs should be committed to a hierarchy of assemblies, fitted into, and dependent on each other, as their allies wished to intrust political power to

the House of Commons. The presbyterian revolution was however, bolder and more complete, for it aspired to change the form, as well as the substance of church government; while the political party only sought to annihilate undue influence and preponderance, but meditated no change in the form of political institutions.

The leaders of the political revolution were not all favourable to the presbyterian organization of the Church. Many amongst them, Hampden and Hollis for example, would it appears, have preferred a moderate episcopacy, reduced to purely ecclesiastical functions, and combined with greater liberty of conscience. But, in spite of their own opinions, they were obliged to give way; for they could not succeed without the aid of their fanatical allies.

A third party, the republicans, required much more. They said, it was necessary at once to change both the substance and the form of government; that the entire political constitution was vicious and hurtful. They totally disregarded the past experience of England; they renounced all national institutions and recollections, in order to found a new government in accordance with their own theories. They did not merely seek to revolutionize the government—they desired, at the same time, to revolutionize society. The party of which I have lately spoken,

the political revolutionists, wished to introduce great changes into the relations of the parliament with the crown; they wished to extend the power of parliament, especially of the House of Commons, to give it the nomination of all the great officers of state, and the supreme direction of general affairs, but their projects of reform extended no further. They had no intention of changing, for example, the electoral system, the judicial system, or the municipal and administrative system of the country. The republican party meditated all these changes; proclaimed the necessity of them; desired in a word, not only to reform the general government, but all social relations, and the distribution of private property.

Like the parties which had preceded it, the republican party was divided into a religious and a political section. In the political section, were to be found the true republicans, the theorists; Ludlow, Harrington, Milton, &c. To these were added, all whom circumstances or interest had caused to adopt their views; the principal chiefs of the army, Ireton, Cromwell, and Lambert for instance,—these were not all equally sincere at the outset, but were very soon governed and controlled by personal views, and the necessities of their situation. Around them were ranged, the religious section of the republican party,—all those enthusiastic sects, which recognised no legitimate authority, save that of Christ, and which in ex-

pectation of his second advent, desired to be governed by none but the elect. In the rear of this party, may be discovered, a great number of subordinate freethinkers and fantastic dreamers. The first, hoped to enjoy an uncontrolled licence; the others, expected universal suffrage, and an equal division of property.

In the year 1653, after twelve years of conflict, all these parties had appeared and failed;—the public thought so, and even the leaders of the different parties were obliged to admit it. The constitutional reformers, who very soon disappeared, saw the ancient constitution and the ancient laws insulted, trampled under foot, and innovations penetrating on every side. The political revolutionists beheld the parliamentary forms perishing through the novel use to which they proposed to apply them; they saw the House of Commons, after twelve years of domination, reduced by the successive expulsion of royalists, and presbyterians, to a very limited number of members; despised, hated by the people, and utterly incapable of governing. The republicans appeared to have succeeded better; they had apparently remained in possession of the field,—the House of Commons was composed of only fifty or sixty members, all republicans. They might with truth affirm they were masters of the country: but the country absolutely refused to submit to their domination; they had no power,

and they possessed no influence, either over the army or the people. No social tie, no security remained ; justice was not administered, or rather that which was administered was not justice—its name was usurped by passion, chance, or party. And not only had security ceased to exist in the mutual relations between individuals, but the country was in an unsettled state ; the great roads were not safe for travellers, they were infested by robbers, and brigands. Anarchy appeared on every side, in material, as well as in moral life ; and neither the House of Commons, or the republican council of state, had any power to repress it.

The three grand parties of the revolution had therefore been successively called on to take the lead, to direct the movement, and to govern the country, in accordance with their principles and their desires. They had all been unable to do so ; they had all completely failed ; they could do nothing further. It was then, says Bossuet, that “ a man arose who left nothing for fortune to do, which his own prudence, and foresight could effect ; ” an expression full of error, and which is contradicted by all history. No man ever trusted more to fortune than Cromwell ; no man ever risked more ; advanced more rashly, without an object or a plan ; resolved however, to go as far as fate would permit. A boundless ambition, an admirable talent in drawing all possible advantages from the events of each day, from the incidental

less certain, that if he had abandoned the supreme power, he would very soon have been obliged to resume it. Whoever had undertaken the government whether he were a puritan or a royalist, a republican or a soldier, could not have held it—no one but Cromwell at that juncture could have governed with any degree of justice or order. The proof had already been made. It would have been impossible to allow the parliament, that is to say, the parties holding seats in parliament, to assume a power they could not hold. Such was then, the situation of Cromwell; he governed by a system which he well knew was contrary to that of his country; he exercised a power which was felt to be necessary, but was not recognised by any one. No party regarded his government as definitive. The royalists, the presbyterians, the republicans, even the army, that party which appeared most devoted to Cromwell, all were convinced that his power was only transitory. He never really ruled over the popular mind; he was never any thing more than a last resort, a political necessity. The protector, the absolute ruler of England, was all his life obliged to have recourse to coercive measures, in order to retain power,—no party was able to govern so well as him, yet all opposed him—he was constantly attacked by all parties at once.

At his death, the republicans alone were able to seize on the supreme power—they did so, and

succeeded no better than they had done before. It was not from any want of confidence, at least in the fanatics of the party. A tract, written by Milton, full of talent and nerve, published at that crisis, is entitled "*A ready and easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth.*" You see how great was the blindness of these men. They soon showed themselves as incapable of governing as they had previously done. Monk undertook the direction of that event, which all England expected. The restoration was accomplished.

The restoration of the Stuarts was a truly national event. It was favoured by many circumstances. The government combined all the merits of antiquity—of a government, based on the traditions, and recollections of the country; with the advantages of a new government, which had not lately been tried, and the faults, and burdens of which, had not been recently experienced. The old monarchical form of government, was the only system, which during the preceding twenty years, had not been decried for its incapacity, and its ill success in the administration of the state. These two causes, rendered the restoration very popular; the refuse of all violent parties were against it, but the public united sincerely in supporting it. It was in the opinion of the country, the only remaining chance—the only existing method of securing legal, and constitutional government, which the country so ardently desired. A

constitutional government, was therefore promised by the restoration ; and under that form it presented itself to the nation.

The first party, which after the return of Charles II., took the management of affairs, was consequently the constitutional party, represented by its most able leader, Lord Chancellor Clarendon. You know that Clarendon was prime minister, from the year 1660 to 1667 ; and exercised supreme influence in England. Clarendon and his friends, reappeared with their ancient system ;—the absolute power of the king, restrained within constitutional limits, controlled by parliament in regard to taxation, and by the courts of justice in every thing relating to private rights, and individual liberties ; but possessing so far as concerned the actual government, an almost complete independence, and the most decisive preponderance ; to the exclusion, or even against the will of, the majority of the two houses of parliament, especially of the House of Commons ;—in other respects, we find a certain regard paid to legality, some solicitude for the interests of the country, an exalted idea of the dignity of government, and a grave and honourable deportment. This is the character of the Clarendon administration, during seven years.

But the fundamental ideas, on which this administration reposed ;—the absolute power of the king, and a government, independent of the

influence of parliament; these ideas, I say, were antiquated and powerless. In spite of the reaction of the first moments of the restoration, twenty years of parliamentary government against royalty, had effectually ruined them. A new element very soon appeared amidst the royalist party—free-thinkers, profligates, *mauvais sujets*, who participated in the ideas then prevalent, perceived that the Commons were the strongest, and cared little either for constitutional government, or absolute monarchy; but pursued their own objects, wherever they could discover any prospect of influence, or of power. They formed a party, which allied itself to the national and discontented party, and Clarendon was displaced.

That portion of the royalist party I have just described—the profligates, the freethinkers—then remodelled the government according to their own views, and formed what has been called the *Cabal* ministry, together with several of the administrations which succeeded it. What was the character of these administrations? They were perfectly regardless of either principles, laws, or rights; and equally unmindful of truth, or justice. All they sought was the means of success;—if success depended on the influence of the House of Commons, they flattered it; if it became necessary to deceive that assembly, they had no scruple in doing so, though perhaps, they might be obliged to apologise next day. Sometimes

they tried corruption, sometimes they flattered the national vanity;—the general interests of the country, its dignity and its honour, were not so much as thought of;—in a word, the government of this party, was profoundly selfish and immoral, destitute of all public principle, and all public views; but at the bottom, so far as regarded practical affairs, sufficiently intelligent and liberal. This is the character of the Cabal ministry, of the administration of Lord Danby, and of the English government, from the year 1667 to 1679. Notwithstanding its immorality, and its contempt for the principles, and the true interests of the country; this government was less odious, less unpopular than that of Lord Clarendon. Why? Because, it accorded better with the spirit of the age; it comprehended more fully the feelings of the people, even while it made them serve its own purposes. It was not antiquated and foreign, like the government of Clarendon; and although it inflicted much greater injuries on the country, it was submitted to with less reluctance.

At length, corruption, servility, and contempt for all rights, and all public honour, was carried to such a pitch, that the country could no longer endure it. There was a general rising of popular feeling, against this profligate government. In the House of Commons, a national and patriotic party had been formed. The king decided on summoning to the council, the heads of that

party. Lord Essex, whose father had commanded the parliamentary armies, during the first years of the revolution, was then associated to the government, and had for his colleagues, Lord Russell, and Lord Shaftesbury, the latter, a man who without possessing any of the virtues of his colleagues, was much superior to them in political ability. The national party, however, when thus placed at the head of affairs, showed itself incapable of governing; it had no hold on the popular mind; it was incompetent to manage the interests, the habits, and the prejudices either of the king, the court, or the people. It did not impress either the nation, or the sovereign, with any idea of its energy or ability.

After having remained a short time in power, it succumbed. The virtues of its leaders, their generous courage, their heroic deaths, have justly acquired for them a distinguished place in history; but their political capacity, by no means corresponded with their virtue;—they were unable to exercise the power by which they had not been corrupted, or to render the cause victorious, for which they did not fear to die.

This attempt failed—the restoration, like the revolution, had tried all parties, all administrations—a constitutional administration, a corrupt administration, and a national administration. Not one succeeded. The court, and the country found themselves placed in a situation very simi-

lar to that which England had occupied, in 1653, at the close of the revolutionary ferment. The same expedient was had recourse to. What Cromwell did to advance the revolution, Charles II., did to preserve his throne ;—he restored absolute power.

James II., succeeded his brother. A second question was superadded to that of absolute power,—I mean religion. James II. desired at once to restore catholicism, and despotism. You therefore see the same contest in preparation, that occurred at the commencement of the revolution—a religious and political struggle, both directed against the government. It has often been inquired, what would have happened if William III. had not arrived with his Dutch troops, and put an end to the disputes between James II., and the people of England. For my own part, I truly believe, the same event would have occurred. The whole of England, with the exception of a very small faction, was ranged against the king, and certainly under one form or another, the revolution of 1688, would have been accomplished. But this crisis was brought about by causes, superior even to the internal condition of England. It was a European, as well as a national event. At this point, the English revolution is connected by facts,—and independently of the influence its example might have exercised,—with the general course of European civilization.

Whilst the conflict I have just described was passing in England, a conflict of the same nature—the struggle between absolute power and civil and religious liberty—was going forward on the continent:—the actors there were very different—the form, the theatre, of the event bore little resemblance to its prototype in England; but it was in reality the same, it proceeded from the same cause. Louis XIV., the representative of pure monarchy, sought to render that system universal; at least, Europe had much reason to fear that such was his design, and in fact she did fear it. A league was entered into on political grounds by many of the European States, to resist this attempt; and the head of this league, was the head of the party which contended for civil and religious liberty, William Prince of Orange. The Protestant republic of Holland, with William at its head, opposed a despotic monarchy, represented and upheld by Louis XIV. The contest was not apparently regarding the civil and religious liberty of states, but for their independent existence. Louis XIV. and his opponents, by no means imagined that they were debating the same question, which had been disputed in England. The conflict was between states, not parties; and was carried on by war, and diplomatic negotiations, not by political movements, and revolutions. But in fact, the same question was the cause of strife.

James II. revived in England, the dispute between absolute power and liberty, at the period when the grand struggle, which divided Europe into two parties; one, headed by Louis XIV., the other, by William of Orange; the representatives of two great systems, which contended for the mastery,—was in course of progress, as well on the banks of the Scheldt, as on those of the Thames. The feeling was so strong in Europe, against Louis XIV., that many sovereigns who doubtless were far from favourable to civil and religious liberty, entered into the league either openly or secretly. The Emperor of Germany and Pope Innocent II., supported William III. against Louis XIV. William went over to England, less to assist in settling the internal affairs of that kingdom, than to attempt to draw England into the war against Louis XIV. He looked on this new kingdom as a new force, which he could render available, and of which his adversary had hitherto disposed. So long as Charles II. and James II. reigned, England belonged to Louis XIV. He had disposed of it, and had incessantly opposed it to Holland. England was now separated from the party of pure and universal monarchy, to become the instrument, and the strongest support of religious liberty. This is the European side of the revolution of 1688,—this is the point which attaches it to the general events of Europe, independently of the part it

performed by its example, and the influence it exercised on the minds of men, in the succeeding century.

You will now, gentlemen, be able to distinguish the true signification—the essential character of this revolution;—it was, as I said, at the commencement of this discourse, an attempt to abolish absolute power in the temporal order, which had already been effected in the spiritual. This fact may be discerned in all the phases of the revolution—in the first period, until the restoration; in the second period, until the crisis of 1688; whether it be considered in its internal development, or in its relations with the general state of Europe.

We must now study the same great event, as it was displayed on the continent: the conflict of pure monarchy, and free inquiry; or at least the causes of that conflict, and the preparation for it. This will be the subject of my next, and final lecture.

LECTURE XIV.

GENTLEMEN,

I endeavoured in our last réunion, to determine the true character, the political signification of the English Revolution. We have seen, that it was the first collision between the two great facts; towards which, during the course of the sixteenth century, the primitive civilization of Europe had tended absolute monarchy on one hand, and free inquiry on the other. These two powers were first directly opposed to each other in England. It has been attempted from this circumstance to prove that a radical difference existed between the social state of England, and that of the continent; it has been pretended, that it is impossible to institute any comparison between countries whose fortunes were so dissimilar; it has been affirmed that the English people lived in a state of moral isolation, analogous to the material isolation of their territory.

It is true, that an important difference which must not be lost sight of, existed between the civilization of England, and that of the continental states. You already may have distinguished something of this difference during the course of these lectures. The development of the different principles, and the different elements of society, appeared simultaneously, and side by side in England—at least they approached each other there much nearer in point of time, than they did on the continent.

When I endeavoured to determine the peculiar character of European civilization by comparing it with the civilization of the ancient world, and with that of Asia, I remarked, that the former was varied, rich, and complicated; that it had never fallen under the domination of any exclusive principle; that the different elements of the social state had there entered into combinations, had contended against, and modified each other; and had been mutually obliged to concede, and to subsist together. This fact, gentlemen,—this general characteristic of European civilization, has especially distinguished the civilization of England. It was exhibited in that country, with more sequence, and greater clearness, than in any other. In England, the civil and religious orders; aristocracy; democracy; monarchy; local and central institutions; moral and political development, have increased and advanced together, if

not with equal rapidity—at least separated by a very small interval. During the reign of the Tudors for instance, while the principle of pure monarchy was making such an extraordinary progress—the democratic principle—the power of the people, almost at the same moment, penetrated society and acquired strength. The revolution of the seventeenth century broke out; it was at once religious and political. The feudal aristocracy had been greatly weakened, and bore at that epoch all the marks of decay; but it continued to hold its place, and was still able to perform an important part in that revolution, and to influence its general results. The same fact is apparent in the whole progress of English history. Not one of the ancient elements of society ever completely perished; no new element ever completely triumphed; no special principle was ever able to obtain an exclusive dominion. There has always been a simultaneous development of all the different powers; and a sort of compromise between the claims and the interests of all of them.

On the continent the march of civilization has been much less complete and much less perfect. The different elements of society,—the religious, and the civil orders; monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, have never been simultaneously developed, but have appeared successively. Each principle, each system, has prevailed by turns,

During a certain period—for example the feudal aristocracy—although, perhaps, we cannot say it possessed an unlimited and exclusive power, yet had a most marked preponderance in society. The monarchical and the democratic principles, each in its turn, became preeminent at certain epochs. Compare the middle ages in France with the same period in England; compare the history of France, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, with the corresponding periods on the other side of the channel, you will find in France, feudality possessing all but sovereign power, while monarchy and democracy are nearly obliterated. Turn then to England; you perceive indeed, the preponderance of the feudal aristocracy; but monarchy and democracy are nevertheless both powerful and important. Monarchy triumphed in England, under the reign of Elizabeth, as it did in France, under Louis XIV., but how guarded its proceedings were obliged to be! how many restrictions were imposed on it, both by the aristocracy and the democracy! In England, every system, every principle, has had its period of strength and success; but that success has never been so complete, so exclusive as it was on the continent; the victorious system, or principle, has invariably been obliged to tolerate the presence of its rivals; and even to admit them all to a share of power.

Advantages and inconveniences are attached to both these varieties of civilization, which are manifested in the history of the two countries. It cannot, for instance, be denied that the simultaneous development of the different social elements, caused England to advance, more rapidly than any of the continental states, towards the true aim and object of all society—the establishment of a free and regular government. It is the true nature of a government to manage with dexterity, and to conciliate all the interests and forces of society; to cause them to subsist together, and mutually aid in exercising the general prosperity. Such, therefore, from a variety of causes, being the disposition and mutual relations of the different elements of English society, it was not difficult to constitute a regular government in that country. Besides the essence of liberty, is the simultaneous manifestation of all interests, of all rights, of all forces, and of all social elements. England had therefore made a nearer approach to liberty, than the greater number of other states. From the same cause, national good sense, and intelligence respecting public affairs, were certain to become more rapidly formed there than those elsewhere. Political good sense consists in the comprehension of facts, in the ability to appreciate them, and to assign to each its place—and

it was in England, a consequence of the social state of the country, and a national result of the progress of civilization.

In the states of the continent, on the contrary; each system, each principle, having in its turn possessed a more complete, and exclusive preponderance,—their development took place on a grander scale, and appeared with much greater eclat. Monarchy, and the feudal aristocracy, for example, were represented on the continental theatre with much greater boldness, extension, and freedom. Political experience of every kind, was much wider and more complete. The consequence is, that political ideas,—I speak of general ideas, and not of practical good sense applied to the conduct of public affairs,—that political ideas, I say, and political doctrines were of more elevated character, and were displayed on the continent, with much more rational vigour. Each system, having as it were been presented alone; having remained a long time upon the scene, may be studied in its active character; we may ascend to its first principles; we may descend to its ultimate consequences, and unravel its theory. Whoever attentively considers the English turn of mind, will be struck by a fact of a twofold nature: on one side good sense, and practical ability; on the other, the absence of general ideas, and elevation of mind on purely theoretical questions,

Whether we turn to works on history, or jurisprudence, or on any other subject; we rarely find that the great, the fundamental cause of things, has been investigated. Philosophy, properly speaking, and especially political science and pure metaphysics, have succeeded much better on the continent than in England; at least they have been exhibited more boldly, and with greater power. It cannot be doubted, that the different character of the development of civilization in the two countries, chiefly contributed to produce this result.

At all events, whatever may be thought of the inconveniences or advantages, which have been produced by this assimilarity, it is a clear and incontestable fact,—and it is the fact which principally distinguishes England from the continent. But although the various principles, the different social elements, have been there more simultaneously developed, and here more successively—it does not follow that the route they have traversed, and the end they have aimed at, have not been the same. Considered as a whole, the continent, and England, have both passed through the same phases of civilization; events have followed the same course, and the same causes have produced the same effects. You will be convinced of this, if you recollect the picture I drew of the state of civilization, until the sixteenth century; you will equally distinguish it

in studying the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The development of freedom of inquiry, and of pure monarchy, which occurred almost simultaneously in England, were accomplished on the continent, with the intervention of a considerable interval; nevertheless they were accomplished, and the two powers, after having successively been exhibited with great eclat, came also into collision. The general progress of the two societies has therefore been the same in all its grand features; and although the difference is very great, the resemblance is still more striking. A rapid survey of modern history will not leave any doubt on this subject.

If we cast a passing glance on the history of Europe, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we cannot fail to admit that France has marched at the head of European civilization. At the commencement of this course, I insisted on this fact, and endeavoured to indicate the cause of it. We shall now see it appear more decidedly than ever.

The principle of pure monarchy, and absolute sovereignty, had been developed in Spain, under Charles V. and Philip II., before it became developed in France under Louis XIV. In the same manner, the principle of free inquiry had existed in England, during the seventeenth century, before it was developed in France, in the eighteenth. But the principle of pure mo-

narchy in Spain, and that of free inquiry in England, did not attempt to spread themselves over Europe. The two principles, the two systems, appeared, as it were, confined to the countries where they had first appeared. It was necessary before they could extend their conquests, that they should be adopted by France. Pure monarchy, and freedom of inquiry, could not become European, until they had passed through France. The communicative character of French civilization, the social genius of France, which displays itself at every epoch, was peculiarly conspicuous at the period we are now considering. I shall not insist on this fact;—it has been developed with great truth and eloquence, in those lectures you have lately heard, as the influence of French literature and philosophy upon the events of the eighteenth century.* You have seen that philosophical France had much more influence even on liberty—than free England. You have seen, that French civilization showed itself much more active, and more contagious, than that of any other country. It is unnecessary for me to enter into any details respecting this fact; I only allude to it, in order that I may exhibit France as a picture of modern European civilization. Without doubt important differences

* Lectures of Villemain, on literature; and of Cousin, on philosophy.

existed between the civilization of France at the epoch we are considering, and that of the other states of Europe,—differences which ought to be carefully studied, if I had any intention of entering fully into the subject; but I must proceed so rapidly, that I am as it were obliged to omit both nations and centuries. I rather prefer concentrating for a moment your attention on the progress of civilization, as a picture, although imperfect, of the general progress of events in Europe.

The influence of France over Europe appears during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under two very different aspects. In the first, it was the French government which acted on Europe, and marched at the head of European civilization. In the second, it was no longer the French government, it was French society. France herself, which possessed a preponderating influence; Louis XIV. and his court, afterwards France, and its opinions, governed all minds, and attracted universal attention. In the seventeenth century, some nations, considered merely as nations, appeared more prominently on the scene, and took more part in public events, than the French nation did. Thus, during the thirty years' war, the German nation,—during the English revolution, the English nation, advanced more rapidly in their own career, than the

French nation did in theirs, during the same period. In the eighteenth century likewise, many governments were stronger, more considered, and more feared than the French government. There cannot be a doubt that Frederick II., Catherine II. and Maria Theresa, were more active, and exercised a much greater influence over Europe, than Louis XV. Nevertheless, in both these periods, France was at the head of European civilization,—in the first, through her government, in the second, through herself. At one period, through the political energy of her rulers, at the other, by her own intellectual development.

In order to comprehend the influence which predominated in the course of French civilization, and by consequence in that of Europe, we ought in the seventeenth century to study the French government, in the eighteenth French society. The place, and the representation must be changed, when time changes the theatre and the actors.

When we consider the government of Louis XIV.,—when we endeavour to appreciate the causes of his power, and his influence over Europe; we generally attribute it to the splendour of his reign, his conquests, his magnificence, and the literary glory of the epoch. We search for the causes of his influence, in out-

ward circumstances, and it is to them we attribute the preponderance of the French government in Europe.

But, in my estimation, the causes of this preponderance lie much deeper; its motives were more serious. We must not imagine that Louis XIV., and his government, owed their celebrity, and the important place they held in Europe, solely to the victories of the monarch, to his fêtes, nor even to the works of genius which adorned his reign.

Many amongst you may remember, and all must have heard, of the effect that the consular government (29 years ago) produced on France, and the condition in which it found this country. *Without*, an imminent foreign invasion, and continued defeats;—*within*, an almost complete dissolution of both the government, and society. No revenues, no public order; in a word, a society, beaten, humiliated, and disorganized. Such was France, when the consular government was formed. Who does not remember the great and glorious energy of that government; that energy, which in a short time secured the independence of the country, revived the national honour, reorganized the administration, remodelled the legislature, and caused society, as it were, to receive new life from the hands of power.

The government of Louis XIV., gentlemen,

at its commencement, performed something analogous to this. In spite of great differences of time, and place, of procedure, and forms, it pursued, and attained, very nearly the same results.

Consider what was the state into which France had fallen, after the time of Cardinal Richelieu, during the minority of Louis XIV. The Spanish armies continually harassed the frontiers, and sometimes advanced into the country. France existed in a continual dread of invasion; internal dissension had reached a frightful height; a civil war devastated the country, and the feeble government was equally disregarded, at home and abroad. No policy was ever more wretched, more utterly despised, throughout Europe, or more powerless, than the administration of Cardinal Mazarin. In a word, the condition of society, though less violent, was nearly analogous to that immediately preceding the 18th Brumaire. The government of Louis XIV., rescued France from this situation. His early victories had the same effect as the battle of Marengo; they secured the integrity of the state, and revived the national honour. I intend to consider this government under its principal aspects;—its wars, its external relations, its administration, its legislation; and you will then, I think, perceive, that this comparison, to which, however, I do not wish to attach a puerile

importance, for I do not attach much value to historical parallels—you will see, I say, that this comparison has a real foundation, and that I have a right to avail myself of it.

Let us first speak of the wars of Louis XIV. The wars of Europe were, in their origin, as I have frequently had occasion to recal to your remembrance, grand movements of nations. Impelled by necessity, by caprice, or by some other cause, entire populations, sometimes numerous, sometimes mere bands, migrated from one territory to another. This is the general character of European wars, until after the crusades, at the end of the thirteenth century.

At that epoch, wars of a different character commenced, almost equally different from modern wars. These were foreign wars, entered into, not by the people, but by their rulers; who sought, at the head of their armies, adventures and dominions in foreign countries. They left their own states; they abandoned their own territories; to plunge into the heart of Germany, Italy, or even Africa, without any other motive than their personal caprice. Almost all the wars of the fifteenth, and a part of those of the sixteenth century, are of this nature. What interest—I do not speak of a legitimate interest—but, what motive, merely, had France to desire that Charles VIII. should possess the kingdom of Naples? This war, evidently, was not undertaken from any

considerations of policy ;—the king believed he he had personal claims on the kingdom of Naples ; and urged by personal ambition, and, in order to satisfy his personal desires, he attempted the conquest of a distant state, which was no advantage to the territorial convenience of his own kingdom ; which, on the contrary, compromised his exterior power, and his internal repose. The same thing may be said of the expedition of Charles V. into Africa. The last war of this kind, was the expedition of Charles XII. against Russia. The wars of Louis XIV. are of a different character ; they are the wars of a regular government, firmly established in the centre of its dominions ;—labouring to conquer all around it ; to extend, or to consolidate its territory ;—in a word, political wars. They may have been just, or unjust ; they may have cost France too dear ;—many objections may be raised on moral grounds against their excess ; but, in fact, their character is much more rational than that of the wars which preceded them ; they were not undertaken from caprice, or from a mere love of adventure : they were dictated by serious considerations ;—sometimes for the purpose of uniting certain nations speaking the same language, and which desired to be united under one government ; sometimes to gain possession of a certain defensive position against a neigh-

bouring power. There is no doubt, that personal ambition had a considerable share in exciting them. But, examine the wars of Louis XIV., especially those during the early part of his reign; you will find they were undertaken from truly political motives;—you will see that their real object was the interest of France, the exercise of its power, and the safety of the country.

Their results have made this fact evident.—France still continues very much the same as the wars of Louis XIV. made her. The provinces that he conquered, Franche Comté, Flanders, and Alsace, have remained incorporated with France. Some conquests are wise and prudent—while others are irrational; those of Louis XIV. were of the former character; his wars were not entered into from passion, or caprice; which before his time were the governing motives of similar enterprises, but were the effects of a skilful—if not always a just and prudent policy.

If we turn from the wars of Louis XIV. to consider his relations with foreign states;—if we consider his diplomacy in fact, we shall find an analogous result. I asserted, that diplomacy took its rise in Europe, at the close of the fifteenth century. I endeavoured to show that the mutual relations between different governments, and states, which previously had been acci-

dental, unfrequent, and transient; had at that time become more regular and permanent; that they had assumed a character of great public interest, and in a word, that diplomacy, from the end of the fifteenth, and the commencement of the sixteenth century, had begun to perform a part of immense importance in the general course of events. Nevertheless, it did not become systematic till the end of the seventeenth century,—it did not occasion grand alliances, grand combinations—especially those of an enduring nature directed by fixed principles; towards a certain object,—with that progression, in fact, which is the true character of established governments. During the progress of the religious revolution, the foreign relations of states were almost entirely governed by religious interests. Europe was divided into a protestant, and a catholic league. But in the seventeenth century, after the treaty of Westphalia, under the influence of the government of Louis XIV., the character of diplomacy was changed. On one hand it ceased to be exclusively governed by a religious principle: alliances, and political combinations were entered into from other considerations; on the other, it became more systematic, more regular, and was directed towards the attainment of a certain end, and in accordance with permanent principles. To this epoch, may be referred the rise of the system of the

balance of power in Europe.—It was under the government of Louis XIV., that this system, with all the considerations that depend on it, was generally adopted in European policy. This, as it appears to me, was the general idea, the ruling principle of the policy of Louis XIV.

I have already spoken of the conflict between absolute monarchy, which Louis XIV. laboured to render universal; and civil and religious liberty, the independent existence of states contended for, by the Prince of Orange, William III. You have seen that the grand event of Europe at that epoch, was the division of the European powers under these two banners. But, gentlemen, no one in those days, saw the true bearing of this event: it was obscure, and unknown, even to those who accomplished it. The real cause of the resistance of the Dutch and their allies to Louis XIV., was their firm resolution to repress the system of absolute monarchy, and to establish civil and religious liberty; but the question between absolute power and liberty, was not then so broadly stated. It has been said, that the propagation of absolute power was the prevailing principle of the diplomacy of Louis XIV. I do not think so. This consideration did not influence his policy to any great extent, until towards his old age. The end which Louis XIV. always had in view, in

his war with Spain, with the German empire, or with England, was the extension of the French power,—its preponderance in Europe, the humiliation of his political rivals,—in a word, the political interests of the state, and the augmentation of its strength. His object was less to diffuse absolute power, than to increase the power of France, and to contribute to her aggrandizement. Amongst a multitude of proofs, here is one which emanates from Louis XIV. himself. We find in his *Memoirs*, in the year 1666, if I recollect right, a note couched nearly in these terms :

“ I have this morning had some conversation with Mr. Sydney, an English gentleman, who discussed with me the possibility of reviving the republican party in England. Mr. Sydney required for this object 400,000 livres. I told him I could only advance him 200,000 livres. He requested me to send for another English gentleman, named Ludlow, now in Switzerland, and to speak to him on the same subject.”

We find in the *Memoirs of Ludlow*, bearing nearly the same date, a paragraph, which is to the following effect :

“ I have received an invitation from the French government, to go to Paris, to discuss the affairs of my country, but I put no faith in that government.”

Ludlow, therefore, remained in Switzerland.

You see, that the aim of Louis XIV. at that period, was to weaken the royal power in England. He fomented internal dissensions, and endeavoured to revive the republican party, in order to prevent Charles II. from becoming too powerful. The same fact is apparent, during the whole course of Barillon's embassy to England. Whenever the [power of Charles II. appeared likely to gain the ascendancy, and the national party seemed on the point of being crushed, the French ambassador lent the weight of his influence to the weaker side; supplied the leaders of the opposition with money,—in a word, combated absolute power, whenever by so doing he was enabled to enfeeble a powerful rival of France. Whenever we consider attentively the foreign relations of Louis XIV., you will be struck with a similar fact.

You will also not fail to remark, the ability and intelligence which marked French diplomacy at that period. The names of MM. de Tovey, d'Avant, de Bourepans, are familiar to all well-informed persons. When the despatches, the memorials, the intelligence and skill of these councillors of Louis XIV., is compared with that of the Spanish, Portuguese, or German diplomatists, we are struck by the superiority of the French ministers;—not only with their steady activity and application to business, but with

their freedom of thought. These countries of an absolute monarch, passed a more accurate judgment on passing events,—on the state of parties, on the claims of liberty, and on popular revolutions, than the greater number of Englishmen at that period, were capable of doing. The only European diplomacy which in the seventeenth century can be compared to the French, is that of Holland. The ministers of John de Witt and William of Orange, those illustrious leaders of the party which advocated civil and religious liberty, are the only diplomatists who appear competent to contend against the servants of the great absolute monarch.

You perceive, gentlemen, that whether we consider the wars of Louis XIV., or his diplomatic relations, we arrive at the same result. We can easily conceive that a government, which conducted its wars and its negotiations so skilfully, was certain to become firmly established in Europe, and to appear not only formidable, but able and imposing.

If we consider the internal state of France, the administration of Louis XIV., and his legislation, we shall discover fresh causes of the strength and splendour of his government.

It is difficult precisely to determine, what is to be understood by administration in the government of a state:—still, when we endeavour to appreciate this fact, we shall I think admit, that

under a general point of view, administration consists in an assemblage of all the means which are capable of disseminating in the surest and readiest manner, the will of the central power, amidst all the members of society; and of drawing to that central power, under the same condition, all the resources of society, both men and money. This, if I am not mistaken, is the true end, the predominant character of administration. From this we may perceive at those periods, when it is essentially necessary to establish unity, and order in society; administration is the grand means of obtaining it, and of bringing together, cementing and uniting, so many incoherent and scattered elements; such was in effect, the work of the administration of Louis XIV. Until his time, nothing had been found more difficult in France, as in the rest of Europe, than to cause the action of the central power, to penetrate every part of society, and to concentrate the resources of society in the central power. Louis XIV., laboured to overcome this difficulty, and succeeded to a certain extent, at least he was incomparably more successful than his predecessors had been. I have not time to enter into any details, but if you consider every part of the public service, at that epoch; taxation, roads, manufactures, military administration,—all the establishments which belong to any branch of the administration;

you will scarcely find one, which has not originated, become greatly developed, or much improved, under the reign of Louis XIV. The greatest men of their day, Colbert, Louvois, &c. displayed their genius, and employed the period of their ministry in ameliorating the administrative system of the country. The government of Louis XIV. then acquired a uniformity, a consistency, and a steadiness, which were wanting in all the surrounding European governments.

This reign offers the same fact as regards its legislation. I must again refer to the comparison I lately made, between the consular government, and that of Louis XIV. The legislative activity of the consular government, the extraordinary labour it bestowed on the reformation and revision of the law, is paralleled by a similar work in the reign of Louis XIV. The great *ordonnances* which he promulgated,—those on criminal legislation, on forms of procedure, on commerce, on the marine, on the waters and forests,—are so many real codes of law, the construction of which resembled that of our own codes; they had been discussed by the council of state, some of them during the presidency of Lamoignon. There are some men, who have acquired much renown, from the part they took in this work:—M. Pussort for example. If we consider the legislation of Louis XIV. only in itself, it is open to condemnation; it was full of

faults, which have now become apparent, and which it is impossible to dispute ; liberty and impartial justice were not its objects ; all it aimed at, was the establishment of public order, the regularization and solidification of the laws. But even that was a great step, and it cannot be doubted, that the *ordonnances* of Louis XIV., so superior to the former state of things, greatly contributed to forward the progress of French society, in the career of civilization.

You see, gentlemen, that under whatever point of view we consider this government, we readily perceive the sources of its power and influence. It was, in fact, the first government which had appeared in Europe, as a power confident in its own strength, which was not obliged to contend with internal enemies for its existence ;—undisturbed in its territory, with the population in a state of tranquillity ;—administration was its sole care. All European governments, until then, had either been incessantly plunged in war, which deprived them both of security and leisure ; or so harassed by internal division, that their time was fully occupied by a struggle for life. The government of Louis XIV. was the first which appeared, in the conduct of its affairs, a power at once established and progressive, and which did not fear to introduce innovations, because it felt confident of its stability. In fact, few governments have made greater innovations

than this. Compare it with a government of the same nature,—with the absolute monarchy of Philip II. in Spain. It was more absolute than that of Louis XIV., but much less regular and tranquil! Besides, how was it that Philip II. established absolute monarchy in Spain? By stifling all activity,—by refusing to accede to any sort of amelioration,—by rendering the condition of Spain completely stationary. The government of Louis XIV., on the contrary, showed itself favourable to innovation, to the progress of literature, of the arts, of wealth,—of civilization in fact. These are the true causes of its preponderance in Europe,—a preponderance so great, that during the seventeenth century it was on the continent—not only for monarchs, but for the people—a model for governments.

At the present day it is frequently asked, and it is impossible to avoid inquiring, what caused a power so splendid, so firmly established, as that I have just described, to fall in so short a time into so complete a state of decay:—why, after having performed so important a part in Europe, it became in one century so weak, so incoherent, and was so little regarded? The fact is incontrovertible. In the seventeenth century, the French government was at the head of European civilization; in the eighteenth, the government disappeared from view. French society, separated from its government, and fre-

quently armed against it, led the way to the European world, and directed its progress.

It is true, that we discern the incorrigible vice, and the infallible effect of absolute power. I shall not enter into any details respecting the faults of Louis XIV., some of which were very great; I shall not speak of the War of the Succession in Spain, of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, of his enormous expenditure, or of many other fatal measures which compromised his fortune. I shall acknowledge the merits of this government;—those which I have just pointed out to you. We cannot but admit that absolute power was never, perhaps, so completely acceptable to its age and its people, or rendered greater services to the civilization of its own country, and also to that of Europe. But it was because this government had no other principle than absolute power, and rested entirely upon that basis, that its decay was so rapid, and so justly merited. What France required in the reign of Louis XIV. were, independent institutions and powers; subsisting by themselves, capable, in a word, of spontaneous action and resistance. The ancient French institutions (if they really merit that name) no longer existed,—Louis XIV. put the finishing hand to their destruction. He took care not to replace them by new institutions which would have constrained him,—for he did not choose to

be constrained. The will, and the action of the central power, is all that can be clearly distinguished at that epoch. The government of Louis XIV. was grand, brilliant, and powerful; but it had no firm foundation. Free institutions are a guarantee not only for the prudence of a government, but also for its permanency. No system is capable of duration, unless it is supported by institutions. Wherever absolute power has become permanent, it has been founded on recognised institutions, sometimes by the division of society into *castes*, separated from each other by a strongly-defined line; sometimes by a system of religious institutions. Under the reign of Louis XIV. institutions for the support of power, and for the preservation of liberty, were alike wanting. There was nothing in France, at that epoch, to secure the country against the illegitimate acts of the government, or the government itself against the inevitable effects of time. Thus we see that the government accelerated its own decay. It was not Louis XIV. alone who grew old, and became weak and powerless at the close of his reign; absolute power itself became decrepit. The system of pure monarchy, in 1712, was as much worn out as the monarch himself; and the evil was so much the greater, because Louis XIV. had abolished political habits, as well as institutions. No political habits can be formed with-

out independence. He alone, who feels he is strong by himself, is always capable either of aiding power or opposing it. Energy of character disappears when the condition becomes dependent; free and undaunted minds are produced by the security of rights.

Let us contemplate the state in which the French nation, and its government, were left by Louis XIV. Society had attained a great development of riches, strength, and intellectual activity of every kind—while, beside this progressive society, the government remained essentially stationary; it did not possess within itself any means of re-invigoration,—it was incapable of adapting itself to the progress of the people. After half a century of splendour, it had fallen into a state of immutability, feebleness, and decay, even during the life of its founder, which very nearly resembled dissolution. This was the situation of France at the close of the seventeenth century, and this situation impressed on the subsequent epoch a very different character, and impelled it in a contrary direction.

It is not necessary I should tell you, that a grand effort of the human mind, and freedom of inquiry, were the prevailing features of the eighteenth century. You have already, gentlemen, in this place, had the characteristics of that grand period described to you by a philo-

sophical orator, and by an eloquent philosopher.* I cannot in the short space of time that now remains, follow all the phases of the great moral revolution which was then accomplished. I do not however wish to conclude, without having called your attention to some circumstances relating to it, which have, perhaps, not been sufficiently noticed.

The first,—that which at the outset presents itself, and which indeed I lately alluded to, is the almost complete disappearance of the government, during the course of the eighteenth century, and the substitution of human reason; as the principal, and almost the sole actor. Excepting in what concerned foreign relations, under the administration of the Duke de Choiseul; and in some concessions made to the general tendency of the public mind, in the American war for instance, excepting, I say, some few events of this nature perhaps there never existed a government so inactive, so apathetic, so inert, as the French government of that period. In place of the active and ambitious government of Louis XIV.; which was felt every where, and placed itself at the head of every thing: a power existed, which continually

* *Villemain's Lectures on the Literature; Cousin's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century.*

sought to conceal itself, to keep itself out of sight, from a sense of weakness and insecurity :—ambition and activity had been transferred to the nation. The nation in fact, by its ideas, and its intellectual movement, interfered in every thing, took part in every thing, in a word, alone possessed that moral authority which is the only true power.

A second striking characteristic of the state of the human mind in the eighteenth century, is the universality of free inquiry. Until that period,—and especially in the sixteenth century, —freedom of inquiry had been exercised in a special, and limited sphere ;—it had for its object sometimes religious questions, sometimes religious and political questions united, but it did not pretend to much greater extension. In the eighteenth century on the contrary, the universality of free inquiry was its chief characteristic ; religion, policy, pure philosophy ; man, and society ;—moral and material nature,—all were at once studied, questioned, and reduced to a system ; ancient sciences were overthrown, and new sciences sprung up. It was a movement, which advanced in all directions, although it emanated from a single impulse.

This movement had besides a singular character, which perhaps cannot be paralleled in the history of the world :—it was purely speculative. Until that period, action had invariably

succeeded to speculation. Thus, in the sixteenth century, the religious revolution had commenced with ideas, and purely intellectual discussions; which very soon led to events. The heads of the intellectual parties speedily became the leaders of political parties;—the realities of life were associated with the labours of the mind. The same thing had occurred in the English revolution. In France in the eighteenth century, you see the human mind exercising itself upon all subjects;—on those ideas, which being connected with the real interests of life, possess the most prompt and powerful influence over events. Yet the instigators of the actors in these great discussions, remained strangers to all kinds of practical activity; pure speculators who observed, decided, and spake without ever taking part in events. There never was any period when the actual government of the realities of life was more completely separated from the government of the mind. The separation of the spiritual and temporal orders was never actually accomplished in Europe until the eighteenth century. Then perhaps, for the first time, the spiritual world became developed entirely independent of the temporal. This is an important fact; it exercised a prodigious influence over the course of events. It gave to the ideas of that time a singular character of confidence, and inexperience;—philosophy never ad-

vanced such ambitious claims to govern the world—never was it less capable of doing so. At length facts became associated with ideas, the intellectual movement passed into external events; and as speculation had been totally separated from practice, their remains was so much the more difficult, and the shock of their meeting so much the more violent.

Can we be surprised, that the human mind at that epoch should exhibit another character? I mean its prodigious boldness. Until that period, its greatest activity had been restrained within certain barriers. Man had dwelt amidst facts, some of which had inspired him with respect, and, to a certain degree, repressed his movement. In the eighteenth century, it would, indeed, be difficult to say what external facts were respected by the human mind; what facts exercised any influence over it:—the mind either despised or hated the whole social state. It believed it was called upon to effect a complete reformation: it considered itself as in some sort a creator. Institutions, opinions, manners, society, and man himself—all things appeared to require new modelling; and reason undertook the task. It had never before entertained so bold an idea.

This, gentlemen, is the power, which, in the eighteenth century, was opposed to the wreck of the government of Louis XIV. You will easily

imagine, that collision was inevitable between these two unequal forces. The prevailing principle of the English revolution—the conflict between free inquiry and pure monarchy, was certain also to take place in France. Without doubt, the difference between the two cases was very great, and could not fail of being perpetuated in the results, but the general situation was fundamentally the same, and the event has the same signification.

I do not here intend to exhibit the momentous consequences of this event. I have arrived at the close of this course; I must here pause. Before I part from you, however, I wish to call your attention to the most important, and in my opinion the most instructive fact, that this grand spectacle reveals to us. It is the danger, the evil, the insurmountable vice of absolute power, whatever it may be, whatever name it may bear, and for whatever object it may be exercised. You have seen that this was the chief cause of the decline and fall of the government of Louis XIV. Well, the power that succeeded it,—the human mind, which was the actual sovereign of the eighteenth century, underwent the same fate. It possessed in its turn an almost absolute power, and entertained an unlimited confidence in itself. Its movement was splendid, good, and useful; and if it were necessary to pronounce a decided opinion, and to sum it up in a few words, I

should say, that the eighteenth century appears to me one of the grandest periods of history,—that which has, perhaps, rendered the greatest services to humanity, which has caused it to make the greatest and most general progress towards amelioration. If I am called upon to pass judgment upon its public ministry,—if I may so express myself,—I should give sentence in its favour.

It is not the less true, that the absolute power exercised by the human mind at that period, produced a deteriorating effect upon it, and induced it to treat contemporaneous facts, and all opinions that differed from the prevailing one, with contempt and an illegitimate aversion—an aversion which led to error and tyranny. The error and tyranny which were intermingled with the triumph of reason at the close of the eighteenth century, which existed in so large a proportion that it ought to be proclaimed, instead of being concealed—this portion of error and tyranny I say, was especially the result of the aberration of the human mind, produced by the extent of its power. It is the duty, and it will I think become the distinctive character of our age to recognise that all power, whether intellectual or wordly, whether it be possessed by governments or by the people, by philosophers or ministers, and in whatever cause it may be exercised, that all human power I say, bears within itself an innate vice, a principle of weakness, a facility of being

abused, which renders it necessary that some check should be imposed on it. Now, the general liberty of all rights, of all interests, of all opinions—the free manifestation of all these forces—their legal coexistence,—this, I say, is the only system capable of restraining every force, every power within legitimate bounds, of preventing any one from encroaching on the other, and in a word, of establishing freedom of inquiry for the mutual benefit of all. This is the great result of the struggle, which took place between absolute power in the temporal world and absolute power in the spiritual world, at the close of the eighteenth century. This is the lesson it has bequeathed to us.

I have arrived at the conclusion of my labours. You will recollect I explained at the commencement of this course, that my object was to present to you a general picture of the development of European civilization, from the fall of the Roman Empire to our own time. I have been obliged to proceed very rapidly, without being able to refer to many important particulars, or to adduce proofs of all I have asserted. I have been obliged to omit much, and yet I have had to request you would believe much that I have advanced without proof. I hope, however, I have attained the end I proposed to myself—to mark the grand crisis of the development of modern society. Permit me to say one

word more. I endeavoured at the outset to define civilization, to describe the fact which bears that name. Civilization appeared to me, to consist of two principal facts,—the development of society, and that of man; on one political and social; on the other, moral and intellectual development. This year I have confined myself to the history of society. I have only presented society to you under a social point of view. I have said nothing respecting the intellectual development of man himself. I propose when we shall be reassembled here next year, to confine myself entirely to France, to study the history of French civilization with you; but to study it in detail, and under its various aspects. I shall endeavour to make you acquainted, not merely with the history of society in France, but also with that of man; to trace the progress of institutions of opinions of every kind of intellectual labour, and thus to arrive at a true knowledge of what in its most comprehensive and extended sense, has been the development of our glorious country. She ought, gentlemen, in the past as well as in the future, to be the object of our sincerest affection.

THE END.

WHITING, NEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

ERRATA.

Page	Page
3, line 17, for <i>is</i> read <i>may be</i> .	103, l. 1, after <i>and</i> , insert <i>the</i> .
20, l. 5, omit <i>to</i> .	110, l. 5, after <i>of</i> , insert <i>the</i> .
26, second line from bottom, for <i>design</i> , read <i>end</i> .	119, l. 20, for <i>his</i> read <i>this</i> .
29, l. 14, before <i>ideas</i> , read <i>the</i> ; instead of <i>of</i> , read <i>the</i> .	124, fifth line from bottom, for <i>despotism</i> , read <i>despotisms</i> .
37, bottom line, for <i>those</i> read <i>such</i> .	136, After <i>system</i> , insert <i>has</i> .
38, l. 4, omit <i>has</i> .	" third line from bottom, for <i>did it neither</i> , read <i>neither did it</i> .
60, third line from bottom, for <i>hand</i> , read <i>hands</i> .	140, second line from bottom, for <i>disposition</i> , read <i>dispositions</i> .
64, l. 8, after <i>much</i> , insert (; l. 10, after prevailed, omit. , and insert) — <i>i</i> for <i>T</i> , read <i>t</i> .	147, l. 23, after <i>in</i> , read <i>man</i> .
" l. 28, for <i>rulers</i> , read <i>governors</i> .	165, l. 27, after <i>those</i> , insert <i>only</i> .
" l. 29, for <i>people</i> , read <i>governed</i> .	" l. 27, omit <i>only</i> .
" l. 29, for <i>rulers</i> , read <i>governors</i> .	208, l. 7, for <i>representation</i> , read <i>representative</i> .
" l. 30, for <i>subjects</i> , read <i>governed</i> .	210, line 21, after <i>of</i> , read <i>the</i> .
74, l. 8, for <i>their</i> read <i>it's</i> .	223, l. 1, for <i>particular</i> , read <i>particulars</i> .
81, l. 17, omit <i>the</i> .	247, l. 23, for <i>to</i> , read <i>it</i> .
83, last line, for <i>Leudee</i> , read <i>Leudes</i> .	265, last line, after <i>last</i> , insert <i>a</i> .
97, l. 18, after <i>assemblies</i> , insert — ; after <i>malta</i> , insert —.	267, l. 10, for <i>principle</i> , read <i>principal</i> .
102, line 6, for <i>desired to establish</i> , read <i>aimed at establishing</i> .	284, fifth line from bottom, for <i>in</i> , read <i>is</i> .
104, l. 12, for <i>graduation</i> , read <i>graduation</i> .	310, l. 13, for <i>positive</i> , read <i>primitive</i> .
	320, l. 21, for <i>expression</i> , read <i>representation</i> .





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